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MANCHESTER QUARTERLY ADVERTISER,

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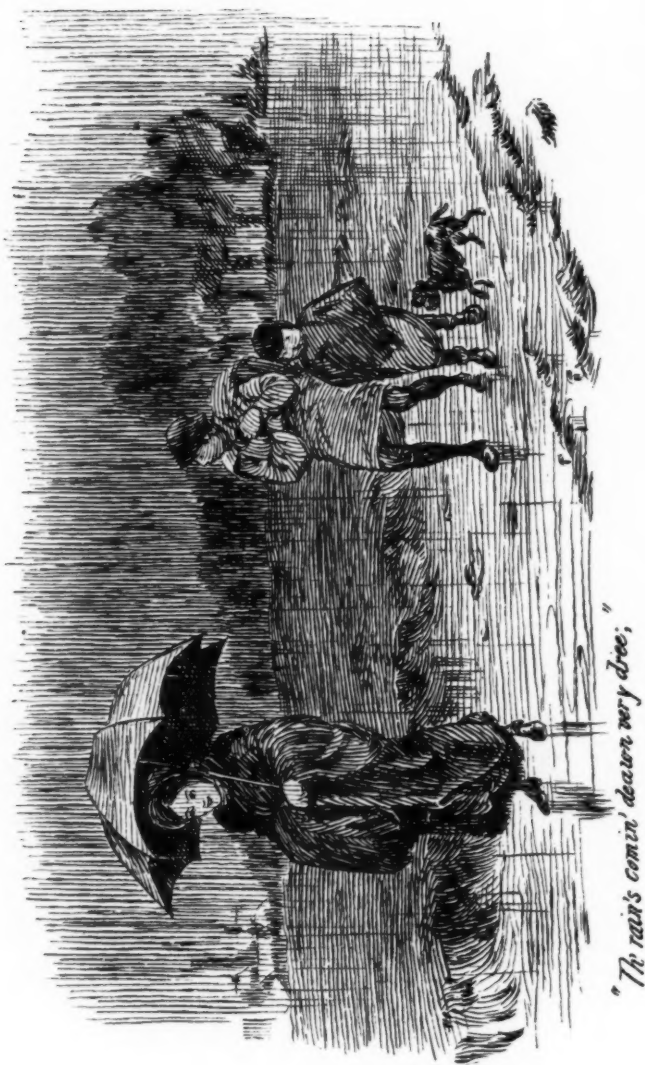
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"The rain's comin' down very free;"



CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY.

BY ARTHUR W. FOX.

DIFFERENT communities delight in different kinds of humour. The choicest jests of the Stock Exchange are commonly too highly spiced to suit the palate of the clergy, while the witticisms of the mess-room are exactly calculated for the average capacity of their hearers. Some revel in the sallies of the music-hall, which to others are as pointless as they are vulgar. But amongst the various kinds of humour none has greater delicacy than the best form of University humour. Even the worst form has the merit of a thin veneer of refinement, and refined dullness is scarcely so oppressive as coarse ineptitude. Momus with the edge of his wit blunted is usually painful; but when he wears a dunghill mask he becomes intolerable to well-regulated minds. "Baudry," says Addison, "is the commerce of low minds," and when wit depends on this alone for its flavour it is poor stuff.

Amongst University humourists Charles Stuart Calverley is supreme, though recently another claimant has been put forward by a rash critic.* The subtlety of his wit, his exquisite perception of absurdities, the keen play of his fancy, and the faultless rhythm of his verse combine to

* An *Academy* critic has set forward Owen S. Seaman, author of "In Cap and Bells," as a rival to Calverley, for which Mr. Seaman will not thank him.

make his productions not merely readable, but immortal. No full account of his life will be attempted here, but rather an appreciation of his peculiar gifts. Born of a good old English stock on December 22nd, 1831, at Martley, in Worcestershire, he was the son of the Rev. Henry Blayds, who bore this name until 1852. He entered Harrow in 1846, and soon became famous for his skill in Latin verse and his remarkable leaps. Two of these last, taken at a later date, may be instanced here to illustrate the fearlessness of the youth. In Christ Church meadows there was a broad ditch, on the farther side of which there stood a willow, with two branches forming a fork three feet above the ground, and barely wide enough for a man's body to pass through. Calverley would leap over the ditch and through the fork, a feat of agility which few men would readily undertake. In Green Street, in Cambridge, a horse and cart were drawn up on to the pavement, and Calverley cleared the horse to the astonishment of those who saw him, nor did he even take the trouble to take off his cap and gown.

Joined to this physical fearlessness was a quiet self-possession which was somewhat embarrassing to his masters. Once, in playing cricket near an assistant master's house, he hit a ball right through the window. Utterly unmoved, he went to the house and coolly asked for the ball from the astonished master, with the sole remark that he "had made an uncommonly good leg hit." The same spirit pursued him when he entered Balliol in 1850. The master, Dr. Jenkyns, was a stately and rather pompous don of the old school, who utterly failed to understand the whimsical student. Once Jenkyns asked Calverley, or Blayds as he was then called: "And with what feelings, Mr. Blayds, ought we to regard the Decalogue?" Calverley had no notion as to what the Decalogue was; but

he rose to the gravity of the situation, and replied: "Master with feelings of devotion mingled with awe." "Quite right, young man; a very proper answer," rejoined the master, quite taken in by the manner in which the answer had been given. When Calverley won the Balliol Scholarship and went up to make the necessary affirmation, he was liberally perfumed with tobacco, at that time a vegetable abhorred by dons and others. Dr. Jenkyns exclaimed, "Why, the young man is *redolent of the weed* even now!" To commemorate this shocking circumstance, a University wit wrote up on the wall these lines:

"O freshman, running fast to seed,
O scholar, redolent of weed,
This motto in thy meerschaum put:
The sharpest *Blades* will soonest cut."

Calverley's reply was instantaneous:

"Your wit is tolerable, but
The case you understand ill;
The Dons would like their *Blayds* to cut
But cannot find a handle."

Once more the keeping of dogs in college is strictly and wisely prohibited. Calverley procured a mongrel, which bore a close resemblance to a squirrel. The master met him one day with the creature aforesaid at his heels. "What! Another dog!" he cried. "Master," was the answer, "they do tell me that some people think it is a squirrel."

A student of this kind was difficult of comprehension by the minds of the dons, and in 1852, after a clever lampoon on the Oxford authorities, he was sent down, but found a congenial home in Christ's College, Cambridge. Here he sobered down, and became a scholar of remarkable distinction. His short, sturdy form and bull neck, surmounted by a head of a Greek type, marked him as

different from other men. He was one of a band of notable scholars. Men like Sir John Seeley, Dr. Peile, Sir Walter Besant, and Walter William Skeat were his attached friends, and all of them bear witness to his unusual powers of concentrated intellect. Keen student as he was, he was not by choice an early riser. His friends on important occasions would battle with him, and finally remove all his bedclothes. They would return in a few minutes and find him snugly sleeping between the mattresses. Amongst the numerous anecdotes of his career as a Christian, the following will suffice to illustrate his peculiar humour. At the master's lodge he was once asked to sing an Italian song. He complied, and only a few of his hearers perceived that he was stringing together words such as "*felo de se, adagio, allegro, andante con modo, scherzo, Medici,*" and others. By such transparent wiles are the ears of fashionable drawing rooms cheated into unmeaning applause. Again, at early morning Chapel, he was found, as the more pious throng came out, dressed in a surplice and smoking a long clay pipe. The master naturally protested against this tremendous breach of College decorum. "Master, it shall be altered," was the only reply. When the morning came he had altered his costume to some purpose, and was found seated in flannels and a *blazer* smoking a short black pipe, and quietly meditating on the mutability of human affairs. These stories, which might be multiplied, will be sufficient to illustrate the character of a man whose fun was as guileless as that of a little child. When he died on February 17, 1872, there were none but sad hearts to mourn his loss. His constant kindness, his brilliant scholarship, his sparkling wit, and his manly simplicity had found their way to the affection of all who knew him, and those who survive him keep his memory green by loving recollection.

There is nothing like Calverley's humour in the range of

English literature. A poet of no mean order, he was able to seize upon the precise form of the various poets, whom he parodied. He wrote as these poets themselves might have written had they been suddenly fairy-struck. Yet in his parodies there is not a drop of gall mingled with the sparkling humour, and his playful imitations did no dishonour to the authors whom he travestied. In his little poem of "Wanderers" he gives a tinker's account of his life thus:

I loiter on by thorp and town,
 For any job I'm willing;
 Take here and there a dusty brown,
 And here and there a shilling.

I deal in every ware in turn,
 I've rings for buddin' Sally,
 That sparkle like those eyes of her'n;
 I've liquor for the valet.

I steal from th' parson's strawberry plots,
 I hide by th' squire's coverts;
 I teach the sweet young housemaid's what's
 The art of trapping lovers.

The things I've done 'neath sun and moon
 Have got me into messes.
 I've seen the sky through prison bars,
 I've torn up prison dresses.

I've sat, I've sighed, I've gloomed, I've glanced
 With envy at the swallows
 That through the window slid, and danced
 (Quite happy) round the gallows.

But out again I come and shew
 My face, nor care a stiver,
 For trades are brisk and trades are slow,
 But mine goes on for ever.

The poet continues in admirable blank verse:

Thus on he prattled, like a babbling brook.
 Then I, "The sun hath slipped behind the hill,
 And my Aunt Vivian dines at half-past six."

So, in all love, we parted, I to the Hall,
 They to the village. It was noised next noon
 That chickens had been missed at Syllabub Farm.

Here the rhythm of Tennyson has been subtly caught, and we can almost imagine that stately poet singing in such a fashion under the influence of Robin Goodfellow. Indeed, as Seeley points out, the elfin character of Calverley's humour is expressed by the well-known line, "Lord, what fools these mortals be!"

Calverley took a mischievous delight in linking together the unexpected and incongruous. Most children have been tortured by well-meaning parents with the promise that "there is something in store for them." Our bard is full of such pleasant surprises. When the reader's fancy expects some serious conclusion to some musical lines, Calverley breaks away from him, and he can hear the sound of elfin laughter as he is suddenly checked by something wholly unforeseen. For example, there is a poem called "Evening," which runs :

Kate, if e'er thy light foot lingers
 On the lawn, when up the fells
 Steals the dark and fairy fingers
 Close unseen the pimpernels :
 When, his thighs with sweetness laden,
 From the meadow comes the bee,
 And the lover and the maiden
 Stand beneath the trysting-tree.
 Lingers on, till stars unnumbered,
 Tremble in the breeze-swept tarn,
 And the bat that all day slumbered
 Flits about the lonely barn ;
 And the shapes that shrink from garish
 Noon are peopling cairn and lea ;
 And thy sire is almost bearish
 If kept waiting for his tea ;
 And the screech-owl scares the peasant
 As he skirts some churchyard drear ;

And the goblins whisper pleasant
Tales in Miss Rossetti's ear,
Importuning her in strangest,
Sweetest tones to buy their fruit—
O be careful that thou changest
On returning home thy boots.

Here the reader expects to hear goblin-whispers, or at least the saccharine lucubrations of lovers; but what he gets is a highly practical piece of advice to the heroine. So in the opening of the "Lines to the Fourteenth of February," in the days when St. Valentinus held sway over our land, there is a statement which well might make a veteran hymn-writer turn in his grave:

Ere the morn the east has crimsoned,
And the stars are twinkling there;
As they did in "Watts's Hymns" and
Made him "wonder what they were."

There is something indescribably fairy-like and playful in this humour. It is as though some mischievous sprite had bewitched the poets and made them talk much nonsense, but infinitely delightful nonsense.

Calverley's descriptions of fair young girls are both touching and expressive. Here is one:

At my side she mashed the fragrant
Strawberry; lashes soft as silk
Drooped o'er saddened eyes, when vagrant
Gnats sought watery graves in milk.

So, too, he shows a sufficient appreciation of the possible sounds of sleep. He sings:

The dew is on the roses,
The owl hath spread her wing;
And vocal are the noses
Of peasant and of king.

Once more he playfully describes the "vanity of human

wishes" in a strain less majestic, but no less pointed, than that of Dr. Johnson :

When the evening shades are deepened,
And I doff my hat and gloves,
No sweet bird is there to "cheep and
Twitter twenty million loves";
No dark-ringletted canaries
Sing to me of "hungry foam";
No imaginary "Marys"
Call fictitious "cattle home."

No less delightful is the characterisation of T. Mivins, which reminds the reader who knows his Dickens, of the youthful Thomas Traddles :

Once a happy child I carolled
O'er green lawns the whole day through,
Not unpleasingly apparelled
In a tightish suit of blue.

Those who have seen the Cambridge undergraduate in the glory of his extraordinary check and enormous waistcoat will recognise the truth of the following lines :

Loaf, as I have loafed aforetime,
Through the streets with tranquil mind,
And a long-backed fancy mongrel
Trailing casually behind.

and of these :

Poising evermore the eyeglass
In the light, sarcastic eye,
Lest, by chance, some breezy nursemaid
Pass, without a tribute, by.

Calverley was not a teetotaller, having tasted and tested the soul-subduing and invigorating power of College ale. He was well able to rhapsodise his experiences in suction :

O Beer, O Hodgson, Guinness, Alsopp, Bass,
Names that should be on every infant's tongue,
Shall days and months and years and centuries pass,
And still your merits be unrecited, unsung?

Oh! I have gazed into my foaming glass
 And wished that lyre could yet again be strung,
 Which once rang prophet-like through Greece, and taught her
 Misguided sons that the best drink was water.

In the course of the same poem the author recalls what is
 no doubt a melancholy fact, that

The prima-donna, smiling herself out,
 Recruits her flagging powers with bottled stout.

He further alludes to an inveterate habit of many other-
 wise sane persons who drown their tears on the same
 principle as an angler drowns a fish, though in a very
 different element, when he sings:

The heart which grief hath cankered
 Hath one unfailing remedy—the tankard.

The whole of the poem from which these stray lines have
 been chosen, will repay a careful study, and the faithful
 student will confess that, as a parody of Byron, and a series
 of flashes of sportive wit, the lines are not to be easily
 matched.

Another marked characteristic of Calverley is what may
 be termed an air of mocking meditation. His wit lurks in
 unsuspected places, like the shining eyes of an actor behind
 a solemn mask. He looks upon human affairs in the manner
 of Democritus, the laughing philosopher; and the result of
 his reflections is delivered with a piquant gravity and a
 highly humorous seriousness. To many, his happiest sallies
 in this direction are imperceptible, for the mass of English
 people is intensely solemn on certain subjects. Amongst
 his studies of social life, and the advice which he draws
 therefrom, his "Proverbial Philosophy," in imitation of the
 immortal Tupper, though an imitation, is itself inimitable.
 He has caught all the serious silliness of the venerable
 bard, and he uses it as a veil to cover some eminently

practical suggestions to a young girl, who, by the study of *propriety*, is to become such a flower that

Ladies shall marvel at its beauty, and a lord shall pluck it at the last.

He contrasts nature with art to the immeasurable advantage of the latter, and remarks :

I heard the wild notes of the lark floating far over the blue sky,
And my foolish heart went after him, and, lo ! I blessed him as
he rose ;
Foolish ! for far better is the trained boudoir bulfinch,
Which pipeth the semblance of a tune and mechanically draweth
up water.

* * * * *

For verily, O my daughter, the world is a masquerade,
And God made thee one thing that thou mightest make thyself
another ;
A maiden's heart is as champagne, ever aspiring and struggling
upwards,
And it needed that its motions be checked by the silvered cork
of Propriety ;
He that can afford the price, his be the precious treasure,
Let him drink deeply of its sweetness, nor grumble if it tasteth
of the cork.

In this progress of vanity our poet reminds the aspiring fair one that

It is better to drop thy friends, O my daughter, than to drop
thine H's.

Herein may be traced a gentle, but no less pointed, satire of the method, not yet obsolete, by which our mothers and grandmothers were brought up ; and we can see the satirist smiling good-naturedly at all the useless pother of presentation at Court, and at that master-demon of Propriety, which "pushes out nature with a pitchfork." Yet so like are the language and rhythm to those of Martin Tupper that the uninitiated might easily include these lines amongst

the works of that great poet, great alike in fertility and ineptitude.

As a ballad-writer Calverley has few equals in modern times ; perhaps, indeed, his only rival is Thackeray. Many vainly fancy that they can write ballads ; and they rush into bare doggerel in *common metre*. But a ballad need not be confined to *common*, nor even to *long metre*. Such a poem must have some traces of poetic grace, with here and there a touch of pathos, or at least a sparkle of humour. For a ballad is designed to express human emotions in their simplest form. Calverley knew this, and as his genius led him in the direction of comedy rather than of tragedy, he has left several inimitable humorous ballads. Like Dean Swift, before him he could see all round his theme ; but in one respect he surpassed the greater humourist, in that he was able to invest all the circumstances narrated with a certain indefinable charm. Furthermore, his mind was pure and his temper was kind. He is nothing if not graceful, and his humour is so genial that while the reader laughs with the poet his sympathies are stirred by the poem. Furthermore, he was too true a singer to be capable of doggerel, and in this he was eminently fitted to be a ballad-writer. A ballad may indeed contain doggerel ; but if it consist entirely of doggerel it ceases to be a ballad. A few stanzas from "Gemini et Virgo" may here be quoted in illustration of the foregoing, with the interpolation of a note or two here and there. The poem describes the love and wrath of two schoolboys, whose ages were "eleven nearly," for their master's daughter, who had attained the mature womanly beauty of thirty-two. The opening stanzas have a simplicity all their own, together with the best definition of a *limb* to be found within the same compass in our literature :

Some vast amount of years ago,
 Ere all my youth had vanished from me,
 A boy it was my lot to know
 Whom his familiar friends called Tommy.

I love to gaze upon a child—
 A young bud bursting into blossom—
 Artless as Eve, yet unbeguiled,
 And agile as a young opossum.

And such was he, a calm-browed lad,
 Yet mad, at moments, as a hatter—
 Why hatters as a race are mad
 I never knew, nor does it matter.

He was what nurses call a "limb"—
 One of those small, misguided creatures
 Who, though their intellects are dim,
 Are one too many for their teachers.

The poet himself forms the other "limb" of the pair of friends, whose intimacy is thus touchingly described:

And three fair summers did we twain
 Live (as they say) and love together,
 And bore by turns the wholesome cane
 Till our young skins grew tough as leather;

And carved our names on every desk,
 And tore our clothes, and inked our collars;
 And looked unique and picturesque,
 But not, it may be, model scholars.

We did much as we chose to do—
 We'd never heard of Mrs. Grundy;
 All the theology we knew
 Was that we mightn't play on Sunday;

And all the general truths, that cakes
 Were to be bought for four a penny,
 And that excruciating aches
 Resulted, if we ate too many;

And seeing ignorance is bliss,
 And wisdom consequently folly,
 The obvious result is this—
 That our two lives were very jolly.

But best of friends must part, and love, though of quite a tropical ardour, is capable of cooling the friendship of rivals. The poet and Tommy both fell in love, as has been said, with Anna, their master's daughter, who had passed from the pullet stage of womanly loveliness. The poet thus pathetically narrates the origin of the separation, and gives a brief but effective description of the ensuing battle :

And it was you, my Thomas, you—
The friend in whom my soul confided,
Who dared to gaze on her—to do,
I may say, much the same as I did.

One night I saw him squeeze her hand—
There was no doubt about the matter ;
I said he must resign, or stand
My vengeance, and he chose the latter.

We met, we "planted" blows on blows ;
We fought as long as we were able ;
My rival had a bottle nose,
And both my speaking eyes were sable.

Out of the fullness of experience the mouth speaketh, and the sight once darkened is long remembered. But gentle Anna, having provided each of the combatants with a plaster, married "Horace Nibbs, the Writing-master." Looking back upon his young love thus blighted, the poet feels his former friendship to Thomas returning upon him, and he concludes his lines with the sublime determination the next time he meets his ancient rival,

To thee I'll drain the modest cup,
Ignite with thee the mild Havana ;
And we will waft, while liquoring up,
Forgiveness to the heartless Anna.

From ballad poetry to love poetry is but a short step, and many of Calverley's verses are occupied with the loftier theme. His work in this kind is marked by wonderful whimsicality. Love is said to be the most changeful of

human joys, and the hues of its victim's soul to shift with the rapidity of those of the fabled chameleon. In dealing with such a passion, Calverley's quaint, elfin humour shines almost at its best. He manifestly knew what it was to be in love, and his keen eye showed him all the painful, though harmless, eccentricities of those who are so employed. Listen to his description of a young man's feelings when he is engaged, and confess its general truth to nature :

Then to hear her call you "Harry" when she makes you fetch
and carry—

O young men about to marry, what a blessed thing it is!
To be photographed together—cased in pretty Russia leather—
Hear her gravely doubting whether they have spoiled your
honest phiz!

Then to bring your plighted fair one, first a ring—a rich and
rare one—

Next a bracelet, if she'll wear one, and a heap of things beside;
And serenely bending o'er her to inquire if it would bore her
To say when her own adorer may aspire to call her bride.

These lines have an artless ring of probability in them, as far as can be judged by an outsider, which points to the fact that their author was writing from experience. Their satire is so playful that it cannot wound the thinnest skin, and the poet's laughter sounds with a note of kindly sympathy. Another plaintive stanza tells of the deep impression made at an early age upon his too susceptible mind by his first love for "his landlord's little daughter." It runs as follows :

O my earliest love, still unforgotten,
With your downcast eyes of dreamy blue!
Never, somehow, could I seem to cotton
To another as I did to you.

The pathos of this exquisite fooling awakes a responsive echo in the heart of the reader, whose mind recalls the rosy days of early youth, when over and over again he "loved not wisely, but too well."

Amongst poems of this kind, perhaps, may be ranked the following proposal made by a poor gentleman to a lady with a small fortune :

Canst thou love me, lady?
I've not learned to woo;
Thou art on the shady
Side of sixty, too.
Still I love thee dearly!
Thou hast lands and pelf;
But I love thee merely—
Merely for thyself.

Wilt thou love me, fairest?
Though thou art not fair;
And I think thou wearest
Someone else's hair.
Thou couldst love, though, dearly,
And, as I am told,
Thou art very nearly
Worth thy weight in gold.

Dost thou love me, sweet one?
Tell me that thou dost.
Women fairly beat one,
But I think thou must.
Thou art loved so dearly;
I am plain, but then
Thou (to speak sincerely)
Art as plain again.

Love me, bashful fairy,
I've an empty purse,
And I've "moods" which vary—
Chiefly for the worse.
Still I love thee dearly,
Though I make, I feel,
Love a little queerly,
I'm as true as steel.

Love me—swear to love me
(As you know they do)
By yon heaven above me
And its changeless blue.

Love me, lady, dearly,
 If you'll be so good,
 Though I don't see clearly
 On what grounds you should.

Love me—ah, or love me
 Not, but be my bride;
 Do not merely shove me
 (So to speak) aside!
 P'r'aps it would be dearly
 Purchased at the price,
 But a hundred yearly
 Would be very nice.

Thus, in plain and unromantic, but strictly truthful, language does the middle-aged adventurer plead his suit, which must surely have been bootless in one sense, if not in another. One can fancy that his exit from the lady's abode would be precipitate rather than elegant; and, even if he were successful, he might not perhaps be much to be envied.

What has been said has been said to little purpose if one discovery has not already been made, and that is of Calverley's wonderful felicity in thought and expression. He bears no resemblance to the professional jesters of the House of Commons, who curtail their sleeping hours by the preparation of impromptus, and of repartees to remarks which may never be made. His humour shines rather than sparkles, and is varied by bright flashes of keen wit. His perception of the conventional absurdities of the life around him is clear and instantaneous. He takes up a poem by some grave poet, and the ridiculousness of its form or thought strikes him. He sits down to write a parody, which bears so close a resemblance to the style of the original that the author himself might at first have been deceived, until the mocking wit flashes forth to banish possibility of error. There is a wonderful description of a pic-nic to the Crystal Palace:

Which strode as Britons can,
The ladies following in the *van*.

Kerchief in hand I saw them stand;
In every kerchief lurked a lunch;
When they unfurled them it was grand
To watch bronzed men and maidens crunch
The sounding celery-stick, or ram
The knife into the blushing ham.

Dashed the bold fork through pies of pork,
O'er hard-boiled eggs the salt-spoon shook;
Leapt from its lair the playful fork;
Yet some there were to whom the brook
Was sweetest beverage,* and for meat
They chose the red root of the beet.

Then many a song, some rather long,
Came quivering up from girlish throats;
And one young man he came out strong,
And gave "The Wolf" without his notes.
While they who knew not song or ballad
Still munched approvingly their salad.

But, ah! what bard could sing how hard,
The artless banquet o'er, they ran
Down the soft slope with daisies starred
And kingcups! Onward, maid with man.
They flew to scale the breezy swing
Or court frank kisses in the ring.

Such are the sylvan scenes that thrill
This heart! The lawns, the happy shade,
Where matrons, whom the sunbeams grill,
Stir with slow spoons their lemonade.
And maidens flirt (no extra charge)
In comfort at the fountain's marge!

How true, how lifelike, especially the last two lines!
Yet the humour is so keen and quaint that the various
scenes live, and the people can almost be heard talking.
The admirable felicity of every line stands out con-
spicuously as the rapid rhythm, and the reader is sure that
the author dashed off his verses without any effort. Cal-

verley never descends to any looseness of thought or expression. His rhymes are as limpid as the pure mind from which they flowed. He is a humourist who can be read without calling a blush to the cheek, save perhaps to young lovers, or an unwholesome thought to the mind. Amidst much that is coarse in humorous literature so called, there is neither a thought nor a line in his works which is not pure and musical.

Listen to his alphabet, the finest version of this well-worn theme, which rises to a climax or sinks to an anti-climax, wholly unexpected, and so sudden that it almost takes the reader's breath away :

A is an Angel of bashful eighteen ;
 B is the Ball where the Angel was seen ;
 C is her Chaperon who cheated at cards.
 D is the Deuxtemps, with Frank of the Guards ;*
 E is her eye, killing slowly but surely,
 F is the Fan, whence it peeped so demurely.
 G is her glove, of superlative kid ;
 H is the Hand it so spitefully hid.
 I is the Ice which the fair one demanded ;
 J is the Juvenile that dainty who handed.
 K is the Kerchief, a work of rare art ;
 L is the Lace, which composed the chief part.
 M is the old Maid who watched the chits dance ;
 N is the Nose she turned up at each glance.
 O is the Olga (just then in its prime) ;
 P is the Partner who wouldn't keep time.
 Q's a Quadrille, put instead of the Lancers ;
 R the Remonstrances made by the dancers.
 S is the Supper, where all went in pairs ;
 T is the Twaddle they talked on the stairs.
 U is the Uncle, who "thought we'd be goin' ;"
 V is the Voice which his niece replied "No !" in.
 W is the Waiter, who sat up till eight ;
 X is his Exit, not rigidly straight.
 Y is a Yawning-fit caused by the Ball ;
 Z stands for Zero, or nothing at all.

Surely this is most excellent fooling, and much truth lurks behind the mask of folly. Some poetasters think it an easy task to write such verses. Let them try, and they will soon find that their "prentice hand" is too stiff and too clumsy. The whole of the alphabet is made to tell a complete and connected story, and the reader runs palpitating through the poem with an indiscreet curiosity as to what the poet will do with Z, always an awkward letter to manipulate. But the author is quite equal to the occasion, and again the echo of elfin laughter rings shrill and with a mocking note as he fearlessly proclaims that

Z stands for Zero or nothing at all.

It has been already remarked that Calverley was not a teetotaller; neither was he a member of the Anti-nicotine League. No; he had found that a limited indulgence in tobacco is an admirable stimulus to reflection, and an excellent antidote to quarrelsome reproofs uttered by those who are interested in the smoker. The wreaths of aromatic vapour rising to the ceiling from the calumet of peace had their own peculiar charms for him; and he thus immortalises the habit and that veteran Cambridge tobaccoist, Bacon:

Thou, who, when fears attack,
Bidst them avaunt, and Black
Care, at the horseman's back
Perching, unseatest;
Sweet, when the morn is gray;
Sweet, when they've cleared away
Lunch, and at close of day
Possibly sweetest.

I have a liking old
For thee, though manifold
Stories, I know, are told,
Not to thy credit;
How one (or two at most)
Drops make a cat a ghost—

Useless except to roast,
Doctors have said it.

How they who use fusees
All grow by slow degrees,
Brainless as chimpanzees,
Meagre as lizards;
Go mad and beat their wives;
Plunge (after shocking lives)
Razors and carving-knives
Into their gizzards.

Confound their knavish tricks!
Yet know I five or six
Smokers who freely mix
Still with their neighbours;
Jones (who, I'm glad to say,
Asked leave of Mrs. J.)
Daily absorbs a clay
After his labours.

Cats may have had their goose
Cooked by tobacco-juice;
Still, why deny its use
Thoughtfully taken?
We're not as tabbies are.
Smith, take a fresh cigar!
Jones, the tobacco-jar!
Here's to thee, Bacon!

From Calverley's day, and before, to the present, Bacon's hundred-years'-old establishment is the favoured haunt of a goodly troop of undergraduates, and they who have tried his weeds will confess that they owe their attraction to their own excellence, and not to the ambrosial curls of attendant nymphs, none of whom haunt the halls of Bacon.

When Calverley was tutor of Christ's College, Charles Dickens's "Pickwick" was taking the world by storm. Of course most of the members of the University read the precious green-clad monthly parts, and eagerly waited for next month's issue. An ordinary man would merely have read and laughed over, and read again, that immortal book.

But amongst the Cambridge men there was a perfect frenzy of admiration, and Calverley, who knew "Pickwick" by heart, offered a prize for the best answers to an examination paper which he himself should set. In 1857, in the College Hall, this famous examination took place; the first prize was won by Sir Walter Besant, the best Pickwickian still alive, and the second by the eminent Professor Walter William Skeat, who was quite chagrined to find a better Pickwickian than himself. The paper of questions contains thirty in number, of which samples will be given. It forms an infinitely humorous parody of that most solemn of facts, a University examination paper. The questions supply a searching and subtle test of an accurate knowledge of Dickens's great work. For example, here is

Question 2.—Translate into coherent English, adding a note wherever a word, a construction, or an allusion requires it:

"Go on, Jemmy—like Black-eyed Susan—all in the Downs."

"Smart chap, that cabman—handled his fives well—but if I'd been your friend in the green, Jemmy—punch his head—pig's whisper—pieman too."

Elucidate the expression "The Spanish Traveller" and the "Narcotic Bedstead."

3.—Who were Mr. Staple, Goodwin, Mr. Brooks, Villam, Mrs. Bunkin, "Old Nobs," "Cast-iron Head," "Young Bantam?"

4.—What operation was performed on Tom Smart's chair? Who little thinks that in which pocket, of what garment, in where, he has left what, entreating him to return to whom, and all how big?

9.—Describe the common Profeel-machine.

10.—State the component parts of dog's nose, and simplify the expression "taking a grinder."

19.—What is a red-faced Nixon?

21.—How many lumps of sugar went into the shepherd's liquor as a rule, and is any exception recorded?

26.—Give some account of the word "fanteeg," and hazard any conjecture explanatory of the expression "My Prooshan Blue," applied by Mr. Samuel to Mr. Tony Weller.

28.—Deduce, from a remark of Mr. Weller, junior, the price per mile of cabs at the period.

29.—What do you know of the Bull at Rochester?

30.—Who, besides Mr. Pickwick, is recorded to have worn gaiters?

But enough questions have been submitted to pose the members of most literary clubs. Let all who know and love their Dickens note these questions, and search their memory and their "Pickwick." When they have found the answers to each, let them follow the advice of Captain Cuttle and, "when found, make a note on."

In addition to his rare wit as a writer of English verse, Calverley had no less skill in writing comic Latin verse. His "*Carmen Saeculare*" is a wonderfully humorous parody of Virgil. It embodies some of the quaintest renderings of commonplace English expressions into the most striking of Virgilian phrases, and every line contains its appropriate measure of wit and humour. But the poet's serious Latin verse is of a nobler type. He was able to translate Milton's "*Lycidas*" into Latin so exquisite that had Milton's elegy been lost and Calverley's translation alone preserved, the latter might have been translated into English verse, of which Milton need not have been ashamed. That Calverley could write real poetry of a serious cast must have been already abundantly observed. In the midst of his most delicate passages of humour are scattered passages of high poetic power. He had a keen eye for natural beauty, as is shown in lines like these:

Butterflies,
Hid in weltering showers of daffodilly
Or marjoram, kept making peacock's eyes.

He has, however, left a number of stanzas of a high order of poetry at the end of a poem beginning with much humour, entitled, "From Dover to Munich." He thus describes the artists in the Munich picture-galleries in

language characterised by severe simplicity, but adequate to the glory of the theme :

There the Amazons of Rubens
Lift the failing arm to strike ;
And the pale light falls in masses
On the horsemen of Vandyke ;
And in Berghem's pools reflected
Hang the cattle's graceful shapes,
And Murillo's soft boy-faces
Laugh amidst the Seville grapes ;
And all purest, loveliest fancies
That in poets' souls may dwell
Started into shape and substance
At the touch of Raphael.
Lo ! her wan arms folded meekly,
And the glory of her hair
Falling as a robe around her,
Kneels the Magdalen in prayer.
And the white-robed Virgin-mother
Smiles, as centuries back she smiled,
Half in gladness, half in wonder,
On the calm face of her child.
And that mighty Judgment-vision
Tells how man essayed to climb
Up the ladder of the ages,
Past the frontier walls of Time ;
Heard the trumpet echoes rolling
Through the phantom-peopled sky,
And the still voice bid this mortal
Put on immortality.
Thence we turned, what time the blackbird
Pipes to vespers from his perch,
And from out the clattering city
Passed into the silent church ;
Marked the shower of sunlight breaking
Through the crimson panes o'erhead,
And on pictured wall and window
Read the histories of the dead ;

Till the kneelers round us, rising,
Crossed their foreheads and were gone;
And o'er aisle and arch and cornice
Layer on layer, the night came on.

With this grand dirge of cathedral music we may leave Charles Stuart Calverley to rest in quiet. His pure spirit was called from earth when his powers were at their height, and when much was expected of his wayward genius. The world is left the sadder for his loss. God alone knows how many more quaint fancies were locked in that soul which has found its home. But many friends, faithful and true, who still survive, think of their tutor and friend with tender recollection. Pure in his life, kindly in all his thoughts, with a mind richly stored with the learning of the ages, inspired by a muse of comedy which is never dull or coarse or harsh, he has "gone into the world of light." His works* remain, few in number but rich in excellence, and as yet no second has arisen to take up the mantle which he let fall. Dear to all who knew him, highly honoured by those who knew him only through his writings, he passed away in the full vigour of powers unrivalled in their own kind. His impatience of the narrow limits of conventionality, his unaffected love of goodness, his single-hearted sincerity, and the dainty finish of his humour, cannot fail to give him a place amongst the immortals. Such a place he never sought. He was content to live his peaceful life in unremitting study, or in the delights of intercourse with kindred spirits. He died to leave a gap in English literature which is not yet filled, and those who read his sportive verse may sum up all criticism in one epitaph from the Book which he loved:

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

*Calverley's *Works*, published in 4 volumes by George Bell and Sons, with a *Memoir* by Sir Walter Sendall.



PHASES OF LIFE.

BY GEORGE MILNER.

I.

In orbits not of our own choosing,
Whirled about ;
Gaining to-day, to-morrow losing,
Blind with doubt.

II.

Now through the empyrean lifted,
Winged by faith ;
Now downward through the earth-fog drifted,
Nigh to death.

III.

Now wearied with life's long endeavour,
Craving peace ;
Now burning for the toils that never
Pause or cease.

IV.

The waif of every wind that bloweth,
Veering round ;
All bearings lost, and no man knoweth
Whither bound.

V.

Yet through this wildering tangle surely
Light will come,
And show us One Whose hand securely
Leads for Home.



THE ARTIST: A VIGNETTE.

BY JOHN MORTIMER.

PASSING, on a summer day, along a thoroughfare which forms one side of a widespread area, once a fashionable old-town suburb with many substantial dwellings, mansions, and houses, detached or in rows, gathered about an open space, now enclosed and still retained for garden and recreative purposes, with pools and fountains in it replacing an ancient fish-pond, my eye lighted upon a weather-worn, brick-built house of an old-time gentility, standing there with unchanged front amid many changes of a modernising kind, and reminiscent, in certain quaint features, of the early days in which its foundations were laid. Its windows, with their old-fashioned framework, were bowed or bayed continuously through two stories, and in the gray-slatted roof there was a diminutive dormer. Within the little garden space in front were some evergreen shrubs of privet, and from among them rose a tall ash tree, whose leafy branches in part cast dark shadows through the window places and, higher up, were lifted above the roof. The house for the time was untenanted, and wore that appearance, suggestive of conscious desertion, which one sometimes recognises in unoccupied tenements. In the present case this touch of melancholy was appropriate, inasmuch as it was associated with the recollection that this was the last dwelling-place of my friend the artist, and also of certain pathetic circumstances connected with his departure therefrom.

"An' Dick, too,
and s'ch wark w' him,"



From a Pen-and Ink Drawing in Illustration of Edwin Waugh's "Come Whoam
to thy Childer an' Me," by permission of Mr. C. W. Macara, of Manchester.

I need not give you his name, but, by way of portraiture, will endeavour to recall certain salient features without and within as they shape themselves, though somewhat indefinitely, on the shadowy background of memory. In form he was a little under the middle height, with a strong, compact head on his shoulders, somewhat tending to baldness, and displaying a prominent, dome-shaped forehead with a pair of keen eyes looking out beneath, whose prevailing expression was that of lurking humour, which contrasted strongly with the somewhat fierce-looking moustache that seemed to assert itself unduly on an otherwise good-natured face. He was a bachelor and a Bohemian, and though in his dress there was a leaning to the side of indifference, in the matter of appearances, there was no eccentric affectation of the artist kind. Nevertheless he was a born artist and of artistic feeling all compact; art was his profession, and you could never mistake him for a business man. He always gave you the impression of one who took life easily and somewhat indolently, but that was only a surface impression, since very hard work must have been needed to acquire the skill and proficiency he displayed in his art, which, in its expression, was always conscientious, never careless. In selecting his region of work he chose to depict humanity rather than nature in its landscape or other forms, and, for the most part, conditions of actual life rather than those of the imagination. He was a charming colourist, but a more exquisite draughtsman, and to this end black and white appeared to be his favourite medium. For book illustration he was peculiarly fitted, and in bringing this faculty to bear on a Lancashire ballad—say Edwin Waugh's "Come whoam to thy childer an' me"—in touch, feeling, and expression he reminded you of Randolph Caldecott. Two illustrations, of the more fanciful kind, I have before me, generously contributed by him to

a little brochure for which I had supplied some unimportant letterpress. One is of a company of merry March hares disporting themselves under budding willow branches, and the other is a sweet, sedate pastoral, backgrounding the words "Gentle Reader," and showing peaceful sheep resting in a hawthorn glade, with two daintily-drawn, smock-frocked shepherds, one seated with open book on a green bank, the other leaning gracefully, crook in hand, and both regarding wistfully a milkmaid seen there linked to a gnarled and stunted thorn, whose branches make a kind of flamboyant glory about her head. In that art of illustrating initial letters which Thackeray was so fond of exercising, my friend excelled, and for the best specimens of his work in this direction you may turn to the great humourist's "Shabby Genteel Story" in one of the illustrated editions, or to some of the old numbers of "Punch." At times he used to complain that the delicacy of the original drawings was marred in the cutting of the wooden blocks.

On the social side, he was a cheery companion to be welcomed wherever men were met together in convivial fellowship, and he was ready, if you were willing, to sit up through the night talking at large on art, men, and books, of all which he had a wide and varied knowledge. There was a great deal of dry humour about him, and a jest lost nothing, but gained much, from his quaint manner of imparting it. He could sing a good song, too, and had a rendering, peculiarly his own, of the Hans Breitmann ballads. I seem now to hear the tones of his voice, as he recited the well-known lines :

"Hans Breitmann gife a barty—

Vhere ish dat barty now?

Vhere ish de lofely golden cloud

Dat float on de moundain's prow?

Vhere ish de himmelstrahlende stern—
De shtar of de shpirit's light?
All goned afay mit de lager beer—
Afay in de ewigkeit!"

In the later years of his life he spent a good deal of time in that old house. His aged father, who also lived there, was much of an invalid, and had become totally blind. In his comparative helplessness he was largely dependent upon the ministrations of his son, which were constant and unfailing. Not from himself, but from others, one heard of this filial devotion which was bestowed as something not personally meritorious, and not to be referred to as anything but the ordinary and accepted condition of his life. At night he occupied the same room with his father, so as to be in ready attendance when needed, and it was characteristic of him and some of his odd ways that he elected at times to take his rest lying upon the floor rolled up on a rug. One morning they found him lying very still there. In the night a vessel had broken in the brain, and he slept the sleep that knows no waking upon earth. He had died, at it were, at his father's feet.

Of these things I thought, and especially of that death-chamber as I looked upon the old house, and have since felt myself impelled to put this little story on record. In the prosecution of his art he may not have achieved the fame that some of us thought was in store for him; nevertheless, in view of the filial devotion which he displayed, he will, for one at least, find an honoured place in that mental portrait gallery of men one has known who have shown themselves possessed of a certain self-sacrificing nobility of nature, which is of more value than any manifestation of art.





SHAKESPEARE'S FRENCH CRITICS.

BY WALTER BUTTERWORTH.

THE first criticism of Shakespeare in France was found in the library of Louis XIV. (1638-1711) written upon a slip of paper in a copy of the poet's works. It runs :

This English poet possesses a pretty fine imagination. He thinks naturally, expresses himself with grace ; but these fine qualities are obscured by the uncleanness which he introduces into his comedies,

This note from an unknown hand appears to be the sole piece of criticism of Shakespeare before the eighteenth century. Only the occasional occurrence of the name in book catalogues, etc. can be added to it. It is worth while to find out the reasons of this long silence. In the spacious time of Elizabeth, English people were much interested in French affairs and French literature. The French, on the contrary, regarded the English as savage, uncouth, illiterate, and this in our "golden age." They ignored our language and literature, with the solitary exception that Sidney's "Arcadia" was translated into French in 1610. The exception is easily understood. A company of English actors made a tour in France and the Low Countries, but failed to excite interest in our young and vigorous drama. A few French guide-books were written upon this bizarre island, and those who would enjoy their quaint and ignorant comments will find examples in the pages of Mr. Jusserand. Of English writers

only More and Bacon were known in France, and they solely by their Latin works. Yet this was a time, par excellence, of intellectual curiosity, when all European civilization was quickened into interest by the revival of learning, when France studied all things Italian and Spanish; England all things Italian, French, and Spanish. But England came under a ban. Puritanism, the Civil Wars, the execution of Charles, swallowed up the drama in England, and in the eyes of Europe we were a lawless and savage nation. No good thing in literature could come out of us. Not until the Restoration came a change.

Another explanation of the ignorance prevailing in France in regard to Shakespeare may be found in the widely different dramatic schools which grew up in the two countries. In both countries the sixteenth century witnessed the passage from mediæval mysteries, moralities, and miracle plays to tragedy and comedy. A free and almost lawless drama expanded naturally from these mediæval plays. But in both countries there was a counter movement of the scholars, impelled by the Renaissance spirit. They drank at the fountain of Ancient Greece, and desired to model modern drama upon classic lines. Italy had led the way with translations and imitations of the Greek. France followed, and though there was a vigorous conflict between the rival schools, the Pléiade, Garnier, and Mairet carried forward the classic flag to the great period of Corneille, Moliere, and Racine. In England the attempt failed. Shakespeare, to name him alone, serenely followed the natural bent of his genius. Before the sixteenth century was out he had, by the power of his plays, fixed the dramatic conception for England. Sir Philip Sidney had, with eloquence all in vain, upheld the classic unities on the grounds, as he said, of Aristotle's rules, and of common sense. Ben Jonson might

subsequently deplore that Will Shakespeare "wanted art." It mattered not. Freedom was to be the watchword of the English stage.

A short summary of the differences between the two schools, the classic and the natural, will make more intelligible all French criticism of Shakespeare. The modern application of classic drama was based partly on the theory, partly on the practice of the Greeks. The chief rules, so often spoken of as Aristotle's, though it is not easy to find them in the "*Poetics*," were the famous unities of time, place, and action. That is, the course of the play must be confined within one day, one place, and one controlling action, allowing no episodes or cross-currents of interest. The language must be couched in Alexandrines. No other measure was permitted. The usual French rules as to alternating couplets of masculine and feminine rhymes were rendered still more exacting by the writers setting themselves "*rimes difficiles*," or specially adjusted and difficult rhymes. No violent incidents were allowed upon the stage. Murders or suicides were anathema. The principal personages must be of royal or high dignity. Their confidants and messengers narrated what occurred off the stage, as without these expedients the action would have come to a standstill. The *dramatis personæ* must be few in number. Love, duty, or religion replaced Fate as the controlling power. No comedy, no low life, no ignoble trait, no homeliness was admitted. The characters all spoke heroics. This, indeed, was implied in the obligatory use of Alexandrines, for one cannot ask the time o' day or say, "How are you?" in all the pomp and music of the twelve-syllabled measure.

The result of these elaborate rules, speaking generally, was not poetry, but brilliant rhetoric. Passion was sometimes intense, oftener stilted. Exacting as the conditions

were, they yielded, in very capable hands, dramatic works of extraordinary technical excellence, exquisitely poised and proportioned, appealing to the artistic sense of an eclectic audience. But the system was artificial, monotonous, stereotyped. There was a lack of human nature in the plays. The sentiments were fine, the declamation splendid; but where were the men and women of this work-a-day world?

Happily, Shakespeare's method, which became England's method, differed immensely from this. His one "dramatic illusion" was fidelity to nature. He paid no heed to the unities. Like Lope de Vega, he placed such rules under lock and key when he sat down to write a play. His aim was to hold the mirror up to nature. Accordingly high and low mingle together, tragic and comic. Cheek by jowl, as in life, we see all sorts and conditions of men. Each play swarms with characters—not cold types or abstractions, but living individuals. The spirited action results in duplication, triplication, of plot. What the French regarded as irregularity Shakespeare held necessary to disclose the character of man, so subtle, so diverse, so changeful, governed by a mood, transported by a passion; a blend of animal and poet; swayed hither and thither by complex circumstances. The poet established blank verse as the fittest medium for English drama, but with his usual liberty of action, he used rhyme or prose when it pleased him.

It is just, however, to acknowledge that, compared with the French, our dramatists are often clumsy in phrase and in plot. Freedom from rules may become licence. The main action is sometimes retarded with us by underplots or incidental themes. Such faults were effectually guarded against by the French. Remembering, then, that in the seventeenth century, the politics, religions, habits, and social conditions of the two countries were sharply con-

trasted ; that in regard to the drama the French scholars, salons, and Court had gradually fostered, and finally championed, a system widely different from that adopted in England, we have little difficulty in understanding why Shakespeare was unknown across the Channel. But a change was coming. The Restoration awoke French interest in England. Travel in this country began to be the fashion, at any rate among the adventurous. Our literature slowly became known. Translations appeared of Addison's "Cato," "Paradise Lost," "Robinson Crusoe," "Gulliver," articles from the "Spectator." Between 1726 and 1733 three remarkable men came among us, the Abbé Prévost, Voltaire, and Montesquieu.

Prévost took an active interest in English literature. He translated "Pamela" and "Clarissa Harlowe." He also edited a journal, "Pour et Contre" after the manner of the "Spectator," and bestowed some attention upon Shakespeare. He said: "For the beauty of the sentiments, be they tender or sublime ; for that tragic power which stirs the deepest regions of the soul, and never fails to arouse the passions dormant in the dullest mind ; for energy of expression, for the art of bringing events about and of managing situations, I have read nothing in Greek or French which surpasses the drama in England. Shakespeare's "Hamlet," Dryden's "Don Sebastian," Otway's "Orphan" and "Venice Preserved," several plays of Congreve's, Farquhar's, etc., are excellent tragedies, where one finds a thousand beauties united."

From 1726 to 1729 Voltaire was an exile in England. The advent of this marvellous man, who was the embodiment of the eighteenth century so far as a single man could be, once for all started discussion and controversy in regard to Shakespeare among his countrymen. He was patronised by Bolingbroke, and was the friend

of Swift, Pope, Congreve, Falkner, Young, Thomson, and Gay. His observant eye was busy in aristocratic or literary circles, in the theatres, in all the fashionable haunts of London. His "Letters on the English," published in 1734, were the first fruits of this experience, and England counted for much in his subsequent criticism. Here are specimens of his pronouncements upon Shakespeare :

If the English do not apply themselves seriously to follow the precepts of their excellent citizens Addison and Pope, they will not approach other nations in regard to taste and literature.

Certainly I am far from justifying wholly the tragedy of Hamlet. It is a gross and barbarous piece, which would not be supported by the vilest populace of France or Italy. A grave is dug on the stage, and the diggers utter quodlibets worthy of themselves while holding skulls. Prince Hamlet replies to this abominable grossness by follies not less disgusting. One would think this work the fruit of the imagination of a drunken savage. But in the reeking coarseness which still to-day makes the English theatre so absurd and barbarous, you find in it sublime traits worthy of the greatest genius.

Shakespeare, whom the English take for a Sophocles, flourished about the same time as Lope de Vega ; he created the drama, he had a genius full of strength and fecundity, of naturalness and sublimity, without the least spark of good taste, and without the slightest knowledge of rules. I am going to say a thing very hazardous but true, viz. : That this author's merit has ruined the English stage. There are such fine scenes, such grand and terrible parts, interspersed in those monstrous farces called tragedies.

These earlier judgments of the arch-critic are of peculiar interest. They show how conventional rules pulled one way and his naturally keen penetration the other. At one moment he was all for rules. At another his revolutionary mind perceives the tyranny of rules. He would extend the unities of time and place. A castle, for instance, might be extended to a city, until, as in these degenerate days, it was uncommonly difficult to define a "place." He abuses Shakespeare, yet condescends to imitate him, as in his

tragedies "Mort de César," "Brutus," "Semiramide," "Zaïre." He began to favour attempts to vary the monotony of Alexandrines, to increase action, to creep nearer the methods of Shakespeare. His critical sense compelled him to place Shakespeare above Addison in his cold and formal "Cato." Yet he is horrified at his use of prose, and condemns blank verse. He does not venture to kill his characters on the stage. Cæsar goes off specially to be assassinated; Zaïre falls stabbed in the side-scenes. Even then the classic critic attacked him for "arming himself with the cleaver of the English stage," and for "gory imitations of that stage-butcher called Shakespeare."

However, there are always radicals about in this wicked world. Unruly men arose who went the length of advocating a change from the form of tragedy hallowed by Corneille, Boileau, and Racine. Lamotte-Houdart, the author of "Inez de Castro," maintained that plays should be written in prose, and the unities should be discarded. Madame Riccoboni wrote favourably of the English drama, but thought it would do well to adopt the rules. Abbe Le Blanc described Shakespeare as "an admirable genius, but ruined by his ignorance of rules. He is a striking example of the danger one runs in departing from them. This poet, one of the greatest, perhaps, who ever existed, has failed, either through ignorance of the rules of the ancients or unwillingness to follow them, to produce a single work that is not a master of its kind. Not one of them can be read through from beginning to end. His vulgarities are prodigious. Falstaff is scarcely more than a buffoon. He makes Cæsar appear in his night-cap."

The learned Montesquieu, so pungent in his "Lettres Persanes," so philosophic in his "Esprit des Lois," makes one unfortunate attempt at the exposition of our national poet. It was in 1730, the year after his visit to England,

that he explained "why Shakespeare had made women speak so badly, and had pictured them so silly." After this it was time for translations. The first attempt was by Laplace in 1745, consisting of translations and digests, with many faults. But he pleaded eloquently for the continuous evolution of literary forms as against the iron-bound rules in vogue.

We have now arrived at the second half of the eighteenth century. Anglophobia was now wide-spread. Eminent Englishmen were welcomed in Paris, including Sterne, Walpole, Gibbon, and with great *éclat*, Garrick. Young's "Night Thoughts" and "Ossian" were admired. There were the usual extravagances and raptures of fashion. "Shakespeare was above Corneille!" "His genius was that of the whole island!" In England there was some reciprocation of this enthusiasm. Dryden, Otway, Wycherley, and lesser men borrowed freely from their French brethren. Dryden wrote a number of plays in rhyme, though he said of the French: "Their verses are to me the coldest I ever read, their speeches being so many declamations. Their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons." He sneered at them as

"Contented to be thinly regular."

Even Garrick shared the dubious uncertainty of the time. In his acting version of "Hamlet" he suppressed the gravediggers' scene, and to Lear he gave a happy ending. But, on the whole, freedom of opinion on the subject was gaining ground in France.

Diderot, Saurin, Beaumarchais, and Mercier introduced a new species of play, mid-way between tragedy and comedy, in which common and domestic subjects were treated in a manner far removed from the dignified persons and pompous demeanour of the recognised tragedy. As Beaumarchais said, "The new world would still be

non-existent for us if the bold Genoese navigator had not trampled underfoot the *ne plus ultra* of Alcides' columns as mendacious." Diderot declared Shakespeare was "a Gothic colossus, between whose legs we could all pass."

In 1776, the first complete translation of Shakespeare's plays was undertaken by Le Tourneur and Fontaine-Malherbe. It is still in use, re-modelled by Guisot, and was a decided advance on Laplace. In their preface they remarked: "Never did a man of genius penetrate more deeply into the abysses of the human heart or make passions better speak the language of nature. Prolific as nature herself, he endowed his innumerable personages with that astonishing variety of character which she dispenses to the individuals she creates. Leaving palaces, and descending to the poor man's hut, he saw humanity there." The translation had considerable success, and was honoured with royal acceptance. All this was as gall to the now aged Voltaire, who could brook no rival in any kind of literary success. "Have you," he wrote, "by any chance read two volumes by that wretch Le Tourneur, in which he tries to make us regard Shakespeare as the only model for real tragedy? There are already two volumes printed of this Shakespeare, which seem a collection of plays meant for booths at a fair and written two hundred years ago. There are not sufficient affronts, sufficient foolscaps, sufficient pillories in France for such a knave. The worst of it is that the monster has a party in France, and, worse than the worst, I was myself the first to speak of this Shakespeare. I was the first to show the French a few pearls that I found in his enormous dunghill." He had, he said, "opened the door to mediocrity, deified the drunken savage, placed the monster on the altar."

In his angry jealousy he wrote a philippic against the

plays of Shakespeare, and caused it to be read by his friend D'Alembert before the Academy. That august body heard some lively criticism. Hamlet swarmed with anachronisms and absurdities. The sight of Ophelia on the stage was monstrous. Garrick had had to suppress the grave-diggers. Wild plays! Abominable vulgarities! But "truth, which cannot be disguised before you, compels me to confess that this Shakespeare, so savage, so low, so unbridled, and so absurd, had sparks of genius." The wonderful old man died two years later. His dicta on Shakespeare were violent and picturesque. They show how enormously powerful is tradition in literature, even upon the mind of a critic of European fame. But he always felt compelled to concede those "sparks of genius."

La Harpe pursued the same strain: "I am very far from comparing to Semiramis a monster of a tragedy like Shakespeare's 'Hamlet.'" "Shakespeare himself, gross as he was, was not without reading and knowledge." "Shakespeare offers sacrifice to the canaille." Speaking of Ducis' production of "Lear": "How has that incredible heap of revolting absurdities, of puerile nonsense, managed to obtain a success as great as that of *Zaïre* and *Mérope*? The chief reason is that our theatre is no longer what it was, a choice assembly of more or less learned amateurs. The rabble has invaded it." This was an acknowledgment that the classic drama had not appealed to the great public.

On the other side, Rutledge, Baretti, and Mercier defended Shakespeare. The last named caustically remarked, "'I have copied the ancients,' some poet will say. 'Well, then, my friend, may they read you.'" But Voltaire was dead, the great revolution was looming near, the dramatic warfare dwindled into mere skirmishing. Shakesperian subjects found their way into pantomimes and circus shows.

Adaptations of his plays were numerous. They were terribly mangled, chiefly through attempts to bring them into conformity with the unities. The comic scenes were eliminated from the tragedies. *Romeo and Juliet* was made to end happily. *Othello* was whitened; the end of the play mitigated, and *Desdemona* nobly stabbed instead of ignobly smothered. F. Ducis was the prince of Shakespearian adapters. He was a genuine enthusiast, and almost worshipped the poet. Oddly enough he succeeded Voltaire in the Academy. *Sic transit!* Some of his changes of the text were ingenious. He made *Ophelia* the daughter of *Claudius*. *Montague* was combined with *Ugolino*. *Romeo* became a man of feeling.

The present century witnessed a great change in the French attitude towards Shakespeare. True, Chateaubriand led off by saying: "He is fit for an audience composed of judges from Bengal or the coast of Guinea. To praise him would be equivalent to saying there are no dramatic rules." But when De Stael, Victor Hugo, Dumas, Alf. de Vigny, had, in their several ways, roused enthusiasm for Shakespeare, Chateaubriand recanted his early error as far as he could. "Shakespeare," he said, "knew next to nothing, and so escaped the prevailing preciosity. He was endowed with comic rather than with tragic genius." Chateaubriand had difficulty in understanding *Falstaff*. He thought Shakespeare a blend of the Scandinavian and the fervid Latin races. Appreciated his use of contrasts as being neutral. The poet has the universality of nature, but his method serves to corrupt art by authority and practice. To read him to the end, without skipping a line, is to fulfil a troublesome duty. *Hamlet* is a tragedy of madmen, a royal bedlam, where everyone is insane or criminal, where simulated madness joins real. *Hamlet* speaks of

Yorick as of a woman: "Alas, poor Yorick, that I have kissed, I know not how oft!"

Space does not permit of my dwelling upon the great literary controversy and revolution which began in France about the year 1819. The rise and triumph of what was called Romanticism are known to all. With Hugo as the central figure, De Vigny, Dumas, Sainte-Beuve, and others about him, a stirring appeal was made against the tyranny of rules. "Stendhal" and others had supported prose, natural situations, and other reforms. The bright intelligence of Madame de Stael perceived that "nothing in life should be stationary, and that art is petrified when it no longer changes." That it were futile to "keep exclusively to copies of the same masterpieces, copies ever paler and paler." But in 1827 Hugo's famous preface to his "Cromwell" brought the question to a sharp issue. It was a manifesto for liberty. He and his friends swept away the unities and almost all the rules except that of rhyme, which is better suited to the French language than is blank verse. The change took time, of course. But henceforth Shakespeare was, for the French people, an acknowledged world's classic. It only remained to be seen how far the critics could understand him. Dumas, in his enthusiasm, announced that Shakespeare was "the poet who created most after God." Lamartine said: "Virtue, crime, passion, vice, grandeur, pettiness, everything, is his domain. The whole keyboard of man's nature lies under his fingers."

Hugo himself gives many comments in his opulent, grandiose way:

Shakespeare is the brother of Dante. He is fertility, force, exuberance, the swelling breast, the effervescing cup, lava in torrent. At each word an image, a contrast, day and night. He alone counterbalances our fine seventeenth century, and almost our eighteenth. Here we are at the poetical summit of modern times. He is the

drama; his name is legion. He is existence. Hence so much swarming life in him. He lives. In him the birds sing, the hedges burgeon green, hearts love, souls suffer.

Reality, we insist on that. He overflows with it. Everywhere living flesh. He has emotion, instinct, the true accent, the whole human multitude. Like Homer, he is a cyclical man. These two geniuses, Homer and Shakespeare, close the two doors of barbarism, the antique and the Gothic doors. It was their mission; they accomplished it. The third great crisis is the French revolution. It is the third enormous door of barbarism, the monarchical door, closing even now. The nineteenth century hears it rolling on its hinges.

Shakespeare is English, too English. Perhaps this Albion lacks disinterested grandeur. This, Shakespeare, gives her. He throws this purple over the shoulders of his fatherland.

The sober and judicious Ste. Beuve brings us back to terra firma: "An admirable poet, and without doubt the most natural since Homer, though diversely, of whom it might be said with reason that he has so creative an imagination and paints so well, with such striking energy, all characters, heroes, kings, and even peasants, that, were human nature destroyed and were no monument of it remaining save his works, other beings might know by his writings what man had been."

Guizot was almost equally enthusiastic in a restrained manner: "Shakespeare sins in regard to form, but excels in matter. He admirably displays instincts, passions, ideas, the whole inner life. The most profound and democratic of moralists. But he often causes his personages to speak a language strange, far-fetched, burdened, unnatural. He troubles little about events, much about characters. He descends to the depth of human nature. It is the man he resuscitates, whom he interrogates as to his ideas, leanings, wishes. He asks him, not 'What have you done?' but 'How have you done?' 'What seek you?' 'Can you?' 'Are you?'"

Lammenais, that earnest soul, said : " A supreme, creative poet, looking down indifferently from a height, reproducing the whole gamut of emotion, experience, humanity."

It must not be supposed that the upholders of the unities had disappeared. When Alfred de Vigny produced his translation of " Othello " about 1829, a good piece of work, retaining much of the poetry of the original, it was received favourably until the handkerchief scene, when there arose a storm of laughter and hissing, ending in tumult. The mouchoir was too much. Such a falling-off from classic dignity was insufferable.

Villemain, a considerable critic, lagged behind the time. He blamed Shakespeare for " excessive liberty, want of art, which led to vulgar combinations and general absence of eloquence." He concedes great passion, but, " with few exceptions, his tragedies are only novels or chronicles distributed into scenes ; his characters nearly always English, and this preoccupation endeared him to the English."

I will conclude these specimen quotations with a very eloquent passage from Taine :

Lofty words, eulogies, all are vain. He needs no praise, but only comprehension. The most creative mind that ever engaged in the exact copying of the details of actual existence. All came from within—I mean from his soul and his genius. External circumstances contributed but slightly to his development. His life was commonplace. His genius is pure imagination. He had the prodigious faculty of seeing in a twinkling a complete character. Every word pronounced by one of his characters enables us to see, besides the idea which it contains and the emotion which prompted it, the aggregate of the qualities and the character which produced it.

His style is florid with exuberant images, charged with excessive and convulsive metaphors, whose bizarrerie seems incoherence, whose richness is superabundance. It seems to my fancy as if he never writes a word without shouting it. Exclamations, apostrophes. Thus Romeo and Juliet pile up an infinite mass of metaphors, impassioned exaggeration, contorted phrases, amorous extravagances.

Lear's curses would suffice for all the madmen in an asylum. The critic is lost in Shakespeare, as in an immense town.

Speaking of the poet's fantasy, he remarks :

A light tissue of bold inventions, of ardent passions, melancholy mockery, dazzling poetry, such as one of Titania's elves would have made. Nothing is more like the poet's mind than these genii, children of air and flame, whose flights compass the globe in a second, who glide over the foam of the waves, and skip between the atoms of the winds.

I have quoted this last passage because it is one of the rare instances in which Frenchmen have shown insight into Shakespeare's comedies. Very seldom have they understood the sweet fascination of the romantic plays in particular. Their own comedy is essentially satirical ; Shakespeare's imaginative and lyrical. In the gay and debonnaire comedies of his youth, the French have seen little but the euphuism, repartees, and artificialities.

The quotation from Montesquieu showed how utterly he failed to understand the poet's unmatched gallery of fair women. Chateaubriand was little better. He considered the poet's " young women alike ; they have the same smile, the same look, the same tone of voice. Efface their names, close your eyes, and you would not know one from the other." All this implies an entire failure to understand the comedies, and it is refreshing to recall that Ste. Beuve, at least, thought these same creations " captivating creatures of purity and sweetness."

The historical plays have excited but little comment in France, quite unique as they are. Perhaps patriotic Frenchmen may be excused from liking some of them. However, Hugo declared : " The series of chronicle plays present a great epic aspect."

I must rapidly conclude, and quote no further. We know that our great poet now permeates the general literature of France, as of most countries. Many modern translations

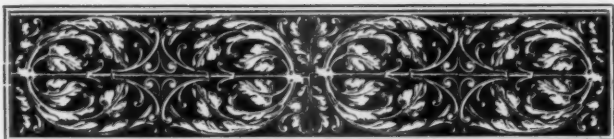
have appeared. Their musicians have set his plays and songs to music. Their novelists have interwoven him in their fancies, and their journalism daily records some fresh Shakespearean incident.

What is the chief conclusion one might draw from such a line of thought as we have just pursued? It is that each age, each people, is bound up in its own conventions. France adopted the unities and severity of form, and found Shakespeare capricious, barbarous, monstrous. England rejected these fetters, followed natural impulses, and found Corneille stilted, frigid, monotonous. He would be a rash man who would say England was entirely right and France entirely wrong. Even now France is the ablest of nations in the technique of the theatre. Their rules aimed at a noble and logical work of art, and doubtless pruned away all minor flaws. Rules cannot be altogether abandoned. The drama is a concentrated reflex of life, and to accomplish this certain rules must be employed. A river runs the deeper and more swiftly from being restrained within bounds. However, the great mistake of the classic school was in adopting rules which were bodily taken from a time and environment then outlived, and in tending more and more to think of the rules and to forget the spirit. The exact opposite is true of Shakespeare. He stands alone as the cosmopolitan dramatist, because he, beyond all others, was true to nature. Who would attempt to confine to one country the mental unrest of Hamlet, the ambition of Richard, or of Macbeth, or of Wolsey, the jealousy of Othello, the worldly gaiety of Falstaff, the contemplative wisdom of Prospero, the love raptures of Romeo and Juliet? These are universal and for all time. Yet Shakespeare is partly the outcome of his time and place. Elizabethan England produced him. The Warwick meadows had their share in his

upbringing. The magnificent Court of Elizabeth. the masques, pageantry, and royal processions; the sea warriors, discoverers, adventurers, dare-devils, of our country's most splendid period; the excitement of new discoveries, strange peoples, stirring achievements, setting men's minds on fire; all these things bore fruit in the poet, and he displayed "the very age and body of the time, his form, and pressure."

How rarely plays of the masters in dramatic art are represented in a foreign land! Probably the fact that the world's great acting plays are few—I mean have a living interest for generations other than those for which they were written—has helped to spread the reputation of Shakespeare abroad. But it is the most significant sign of his pre-eminence that he alone has signally broken down the barriers of time, clime, and country. He alone appeals to British, Teuton and Latin, though, of course, in varying degree, and has compelled the attention of all civilization. It is vain to imagine a time when we might pass the bounds of national habit, or sentiment, or prejudice, when the great dramatists of Spain, France, Germany, Italy, might unfold to us their noble conceptions, but it would surely be well to turn to these masterpieces, away from the flimsy or mechanical stage-stuff of the day. Still enthusiasm for dramatic work is not to be galvanised. Above all things the drama must be living, and appeal to the folk of its own time through the spirit of that time—happy if it also contain something of the universally and eternally true!





GLIMPSES OF ARAB LIFE.

BY SIM SCHOFIELD.

IT was in the early spring of 1891 when I paid my visit to the land of the Pharoahs. In this brief sketch it will be my object to give a few impressions received during my voyage to and stay in Egypt. Time will have worn out some of the impressions, but what memory has retained I will endeavour, in my own way and style, to narrate, avoiding, as far as possible, the beaten track taken by other and more able writers. My first glimpse of Arab life was at Algiers. What a sight met my astonished gaze as I set foot for the first time on the soil of the African Continent. All kinds of races seemed to be mingling together, the numerous Arabs varying as much in colour as they did in tribe and dress. Some of the swell Arabs were arrayed in the most gaudy dress, whilst others, of the darker ilk, seemed clothed with nothing but a dirty sack, three holes being made in it, one for the head and two for the arms. The Arab women presented to me a most hideous appearance, as they walked about with their faces and heads covered with white cloth, more resembling corpses than live human beings. Verily, there is no accounting for taste. It was amusing to find what big swells some of the Arabs seemed to be. Even the road sweepers, navvies, and the very shoe-blacks were puffing the smoke from cigarettes while following their varied avocations.

Returning to the steamer, I found we had taken on board a few Arabs as deck passengers. They were huddled together in rudely constructed tents like so many cattle. It seems they are carried at a very low rate, and find their own food. Among the deck passengers we had taken on board were four wandering Italian musicians. The Arabs had made a tent close to the first officer's room, as they were afraid to be near or mix with, what they term, the Italian infidels. The first officer, a stalwart Lancashire fellow, and who must have been an unsectarian and wicked Radical, told them he would have none of that nonsense there. Still they refused to stir. But the officer was equal to the occasion, for when he brought out the hose-pipe and made preparations for playing upon them they took up their beds and walked.

During our voyage to Alexandria I had an opportunity of studying the manners and customs of these Arabs, and from what I saw I came to the conclusion that those on board, at any rate, were a lazy and dirty people. They scarcely ever stirred from their rough-made beds. Most of their time was passed sleeping, card-playing, and smoking, except at sundown, when some of the more pious would read the Koran, wash their feet, turn their faces towards the East, and commence to pray. In their prayers they pointed their clasped hands towards Mecca, and then began to bow and bend. Finally they got on their knees and kissed the ground with their lips and brow. Their diet consisted of dry bread and water; those in a better position would occasionally have a tomato. One of the Arabs on board had two wives with him, but he was a kind of a "boss" trading Arab. Another of the Arabs had two servants with him, and during our voyage one of the passengers who understood the Arabic language overheard a bargain made to sell these two slave servants to the one

who had two wives. Of course the slaves were consenting parties to the sale, and could, I was told, be free if they liked, but they were willing to be slaves and sold as chattels because they expected their master would keep them when too old to work.

Immediately they were sold the buyer took them into his charge, and put one of them, a Eunuch, with his two wives. And so slavery of this description was actually in force on a British ship. When we reached the dock at Alexandria the Arabs of all complexions fairly swarmed on our decks, and it was amusing to see our second mate, a sturdy Lancashire fellow, clear the decks of these pests. To some of the more stupid he said, "Come, my black angel, off you go!" at the same time getting hold of their necks and legs, in the wrestling fashion, and pitching them off. The object of the Arabs was to seize our luggage and take it to the hotels that they were touting for, and this they would have done without our consent if they had not been carefully watched. At the railway stations we found them conducting themselves in the same way, making the place a perfect bedlam. As an instance of how labour is paid in Egypt, one of the officers informed me that the Arabs would unload a boat at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton. In Liverpool the English labourer would get between 2s. and 3s. per ton. What a scope there must be here for the Trades Unionist agitator. It is really painful to watch these poor labouring Arabs struggling and staggering under the large burdens they carry. Talk about slavery! It is worse than slavery to find men selling both bone and sinew for such paltry wages. Can it be wondered at that this unnatural and slavish work should crush the very humanity out of these poor Arabs, and actually deaden their feelings for one another? The following account of an accident, related to me by one of the officers, tends to

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prove this. On one occasion, when unloading the boat, one of these slavish Arabs got dreadfully crushed. His fellow-workmen coolly pushed him on one side, and left him groaning and dying in his misery. On being asked if they were not going to do something to relieve their wounded and suffering brother, they inhumanly replied: "Let him die. Plenty more Arabs!" The poor, unfortunate creature did die, and the only succour and sympathy he got in his last moments was from persons who were strangers to him. A large number of the poor Arabs seem to have no houses or huts to dwell in. During our walks in the evening we noticed many of them squatting and sleeping on the ground and in all kinds of corners. They seem quite accustomed to this sleeping out in the warm night air. At first we were a little startled by nearly stumbling across them as they lay about our feet. The population of Cairo, which is about 400,000, seems to be mainly composed of the very poor and the wealthy. There does not appear to be many of the middle class. The native married women in Cairo are not only veiled, but they have something resembling a weaver's bobbin or a cartridge fixed downwards in the centre of their foreheads. Those without these horrid-like "bobbins" and tatooed on the chin, we were told, were widows.

Desiring a little change one evening while in Cairo, I persuaded two of our party to accompany me to a kind of "free-and-easy" Arab concert. The entertainment was given in one of the low cafes. On a slightly raised platform in the room were four women wearing those detestable looking "bobbins," one or two without, and some men. These composed the artistes, the men having most peculiar instruments, and all the females were smoking cigarettes. As soon as we entered the room two of the Arab women commenced to sing. The song sounded like a weird wail.

There was a kind of a leader, or master of ceremonies, who went about the room in front of the platform making the most dismal noise, inducing one to fancy he was suffering from sea-sickness.

Judging from the signs of approval that were made by the listeners, it would seem as if the song were an impromptu one, or, as we say in the Lancashire dialect, "made as they went on." There were yells of laughter and screams as hit after hit was made, and occasionally there was a snatch of a chorus which the company joined at. It seemed a never-ending sort of a song, or one of those old-fashioned ones with two or three hundred verses in it. When this thing called singing had been going on for about half an hour, and there seemed no signs of a winding-up to it, I turned to my friends and said, "Have you had nearly enough of this?" "We have been weary a long time," was the general reply. And so we left the place, but the song still went on, and whether it is yet finished I cannot say, for the following day, when passing the room, I stepped in again, and the same women were there singing, and for aught I know it was the same old song.

My love for adventure and novel sights would not allow me to lie in bed, like some of my companions did, until the middle of the forenoon. In the early morning I was astir exploring by myself some of the Arab villages on the confines of the city. Here I obtained glimpses of some of the dark and rudely-constructed huts of the Arabs. There was no furniture inside these huts. In a few there was a little straw to lie on, and a square sort of a soap box served as a table. Most of them were filthy in the extreme, and "as hateful to me as the reek of a limekiln." Close by a cluster of these huts was a brick yard, where bricks were being made out of mud, straw being mixed with it to keep them together until they dried. The bricks were afterwards

burned in an open fire kiln after the English fashion. Knowing something about brick-making (having spent ten years of my early life in the brickfield), I was astonished to see what good bricks could be made out of the materials I have named.

My third day in Cairo was spent in visiting the bazaars and other places of interest in and around the city. I went from place to place on an ass. The donkeys of Cairo are really fine and well-kept animals. They are known the world over for their breed and beauty. You can get a donkey and a driver to accompany you at the rate of 1s. 6d. per half-day. They are to be found at the various street corners, and most of the donkeys have rings of shells, jingling bells, and coins round their necks. Some of the animals are named after the English and American celebrities, Mrs. Langtry, Mr. Gladstone, and Mark Twain being the most conspicuous. The sex of the animal made no difference to the name. Rich and poor alike patronise the fine Cairo ass. It was on one of these animals that I started on my tour round the bazaars. To the English traveller the native bazaars are most interesting. The narrow, zig-zag streets, lined on each side with small and peculiar-shaped Arab shops, in which all kinds of Oriental wares are being made and sold, were very picturesque.

It was with the greatest difficulty that I made my way through these dark, dirty, and narrow winding streets. To view the bazaars in some of the narrow passages I had to dismount from my donkey and go on foot, when I was surrounded by crowds of jabbering Arabs eager to sell me their wares. Fortunately I had with me a faithful and genial donkey-driver guide, who could speak a little broken English. He seemed to look upon me as his special property, and that it was his duty to protect me as such. So attached did he become to me that I verily believe that

he would have protected me with his life if it had been necessary. This trusty guide assisted me to make some good bargains for various curios. I was much struck and amused at his bold procedure. If I made what he thought a reasonable offer for any article and the offer was refused, he would ask me for the amount of money I had offered. Placing the same into the hands of the shopkeeper, he would seize the article I wanted, put it inside his thin slop, and walk away. Once or twice this strange action led to such a war of words that I thought my guide would have had a fight with the shopkeepers. Turning round to me, he would exclaim in his broken English: "Me not have you cheat." He was quite a character, was this guide, and I naturally grew very fond of him.

On one occasion when we were out together he pointed out to me a fine mansion belonging to some Pasha, remarking at the time, "Too much Pasha here." I said to him: "Why, you are a regular Republican." He smiled, not knowing, of course, what I meant. Once I asked him if he would like to go back with me to England. "Yes," he replied; "me like to go England." "But how many wives have you?" I enquired. He answered, "Me one wife; men have sense, one wife; men no sense have two, three, four." "Bravo, Ali!" I replied; "you are quite a philosopher." He laughed, evidently concluding I had said something very complimentary to him. On another occasion when out with my Arab guide, he showed me a long and sharp-pointed dagger in a wooden sheath, which he had concealed in his clothes. I persuaded him to sell it me for a franc, and I brought the weapon home with me.

Just another guide episode before concluding my paper. One day we went to see the Virgin's Tree and Joseph's Well, which are some miles outside of the city. It is said that Joseph and Mary rested under the shade of this tree

when fleeing from Herod's cruel edict. The tree, which is a sycamore fig, was still growing. There is a fence around the gnarled and twisted trunk to protect the tree from the depredations of persons anxious to leave their names behind them. Personally, I felt a little sceptical concerning the alleged historic association of the tree. My guide, in describing the tree and its association, got a little mixed in his knowledge of Scripture names. He was telling me that Moses and Mary rested here with the young Child Jesus. A Frenchman, overhearing the remark, impulsively interrupted him, saying, "No, my frien, it vos not Moses—it vos Joseph." My guide insisted it was Moses, and the Frenchman persisted in his correction, "It vos Joseph." I verily believe, if I had encouraged my guide, he would have fought this Frenchman rather than have given way. It was not without a struggle that I could suppress my love for a battle between these two disputants. But with an effort I did so, and, calling my guide on one side, quietly told him he was in the wrong. He at once bowed to my decision, doubtless feeling it was his bounden duty to submit to his paymaster.

Such are a few of the impressions remaining with me of my visit to Egypt, and of the glimpses I obtained of Arab life.





THE POEMS OF GEORGE MEREDITH.

BY J. H. BROCKLEHURST.

GEORGE MEREDITH, during the last half of this century, has slowly won for himself as a novelist, a great reputation. It was as a poet, however, that he entered the literary profession, his first volume of poems being published in 1851, five years prior to the "Shaving of Shagpat," and eight years before his first novel, "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel."

Not a few men, eminent in art and letters, have exercised themselves or essayed their strength in a medium other than that to which they owe their fame. But Meredith differs from most of the men we could name under this head, inasmuch as he has made both branches of the literary art, poetry and novel-writing, the serious work of his life, and one is not undertaken as a kind of mental calisthenics by way of preparation for the other.

Born in Hampshire on the 12th February, 1828, there have come from his pen thirteen novels, several stories, frequent contributions to the magazines and reviews, and, besides a number of small poems to be found in various periodicals but not since reprinted, some seven volumes containing poetry, which entitles him to a high place among the poets of the period.

It will be of interest to recall the order and dates of the publication of the verse. As stated, his first book, a fools-cap octavo volume, came from the press in 1851 under the title "Poems: by George Meredith." They were dedi-

cated to his father-in-law, Thomas Love Peacock, and the fifty-one poems are contained in 160 pages. The title-page is adorned with an apt quotation from R. H. Horne's "Orion"—apt, because one seems to see in it evidence of a yearning in the youthful poet that his eyes may be opened "purely to behold the face of Nature." It is in this direction he has since achieved his greatest distinction.

The next volume came out in 1862 under the title "Modern Love and Poems of the English Roadside, with Poems and Ballads." The poem known as "Modern Love" has since been issued by MacMillan and Co., together with "The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady," in one volume. Four of the finest stanzas only of "Modern Love" are included in the "Selected Poems" issued in 1898 by Constable and Co. under Mr. Meredith's own supervision.

"Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth" appeared in 1883. While most of these poems were new, among which we note "The Woods of Westernmain," eleven are reprints from the reviews and magazines of the years 1865 to 1883. The matchless pastoral "Love in the Valley" and "A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt" are to be found here, disinterred from the pages of *MacMillan's Magazine* and the *Fortnightly Review*.

The two volumes "Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life" and "A Reading of Earth," published respectively in 1887 and 1888, are honoured in Constable's two collected editions of Meredith's works, by re-publication in their entirety, with the single exception of the poem "France, 1870," which is re-issued only in the "Odes," of 1898.

In 1892 MacMillan and Co. published the sixth volume, the title-page reading, "Poems, the Empty Purse, with Odes to the Comic Spirit, to Youth in Memory and Verses." A second edition made its appearance in 1895.

His latest work in verse, "Odes in Contribution to the

Song of French History," made its appearance in 1898, Constable and Co. being the publishers. It is very appropriately inscribed to his friend Mr. John Morley, whose acquaintance with French history and literature is probably not exceeded by any living Englishman. These publishers in the same year also published three volumes of Meredith's collected poems in their edition de luxe of his works, and two volumes, less comprehensive, in a cheaper form. The better edition contains most of the poems Meredith has produced, and is noteworthy, because it includes the 1851 series which have been so difficult of access.

These early poems possess now, in the years of fame, an evolutionary interest. One discerns in them the true poetic instinct, though they have no special distinctiveness. The birds and flowers, the streams and the mountains, mist and cloud and ocean, have whispered to his soul their messages of joy and sorrow and love, and in melodious verse he repeats what he has heard. The sweet wild rose, as "the year's own darling and the summer's queen" might be equalled by fifty minor poets; but he who detects in the snowdrop—"its pale cheek veined through with infant green"—"the prophet of the flowers," rises to a higher level of thought and expression.

Reminiscent though these verses be of other poets, we continually meet with lines quivering with life and giving promise of great excellence in the future. Here are to be found rhythm, simple language, fit expression, ideas suffused with the glow of youthful emotion, and abundant indications of a mind of more than ordinary powers of perception, coupled with no mean interpretative ability; but above all there are a humble spirit and a heart in sympathy with created things, without which a poet would be cold and poor indeed.

In the years that have elapsed since these poems were published, Meredith has advanced far. There is a wide gulf fixed between the four lines of '51, merely descriptive of "The Poetry of Shakespeare," and the two masterly sonnets of '83 on "The Spirit of Shakespeare," so comprehensive, critical, and yet reverential towards him, earth's greatest son. There has been immense mental development and increase of executive ability in this period, but, along with it in many poems, we observe, a changed manner of writing to have set in, and it abides. Contrast, for instance, the "France, 1870," with the later "Alsace-Lorraine."

One would have been bold to predict from the productions of the poet of twenty-three the involved style, far-fetched metaphors, and obscurities that characterise his more recent work, which, it has been said, "taxes the fidelity of his loyal admirers rather severely." Fidelity is a charming virtue, but should not induce us to expect too much of our heroes. Man is a creature of many moods, and these are reflected in his works, literary or otherwise. Admirers, with pre-conceived notions of particular excellence of merit in their author's latest creation, bearing this truism in mind, would often be saved from disappointment. The function of the critic is not admiration, neither is it condemnation; he must boldly attempt to get at the truth and seize the significance of the work under survey. In this spirit should criticism of a man of Meredith's genius be entered upon, exhibiting as he does, such eccentricity and strength.

Beauty of form and smoothness of finish are not essential to poetry, but without them it cannot be of the highest. These desirable qualities are too often absent from Meredith's poetical productions; but over-elaboration is rather his chief fault, and the three odes, "The Revolution,"

"Napoleon," and "Alsace-Lorraine" may be cited as the most conspicuous examples. The frequent employment of very unusual or obsolete words is not to be commended, and one is appalled by the endless metaphor and rhetorical flourishes of these three poems. In the study of poetry so learned and grandiloquent, the question forces itself upon you as to whether this man is one of us. Some little "twist of brain" has, it may be, produced a man in advance of his time.

One of those writers of post-dated essays in the guise of fiction has somewhere dwelt upon the progress that a few centuries will show to have been made in literary methods, and so great will be the divergence in language, style, and treatment that we shall have become almost incomprehensible to them. I suppose the Rip-van-Winkles we leave behind us, on their awakening in that intellectual and brilliant future, will find themselves at a loss to understand the writers of that period, unless they have the Meredithian mind, which should be equal to any difficulty. The thought is strongly suggested that Meredith is anticipating events, and perhaps the works now suffering severest condemnation should be taken as indicative of the lines of development in the art of poetry.

The question of style must constantly be forced upon the minds of his readers, so tortuous, perverse, and defiant is he, but powerful, eloquent, and deeply instructive notwithstanding. He has Browning's intellectual strength combined with Tennyson's minute accuracy of observation, and the man who can add to these qualities the power of dictum in verse demands conscientious, careful consideration, be his limitations what they may.

Meredith is not regardless of popular esteem and appreciation of his works, as his attitude at times seems to indicate, and he rejoices at the idea of being a pioneer and a

formative influence in the literary world. This is clear from a letter written in 1887 to the author of an article on his novels in an American magazine, and quoted in the *Manchester Guardian* two or three years ago. He says to this friendly critic, "When at the conclusion of your article on my works you say, that a change in public taste, should it come about, will be to some extent due to me, you hand me the flowering wreath which I covet. For I think that all right use of life is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us." And when we are inclined to condemn his style, and gird against his recondite utterances, let us mercifully remember these two sentences from the same letter: "Concerning style, thought is tough, and dealing with thought produces toughness. Or, when strong emotion is in tide against the active mind, there is perforce confusion." We may pardon the toughness, and, under the circumstances named, condone in a measure the confusion, incompatible as it is, with our ordinary standards of art. The best literature, however, conveys the best thoughts in a pleasing form. This holds good in prose, and more especially is it the case in poetry. True, poetry is the language of passion and imagination, but these two attributes of heart and mind should be so controlled that language does not become elusive, difficult, and confused. Schopenhauer has said, "The impression made by a masterpiece varies with the capacity of the mind to understand it." This dictum probably accounts for the apparent mysteriousness of certain phrases and passages in Meredith's poetry, for they are doubtless explicable by their author, though he himself in one place asks, "What's my drift?"

Meredith's poems have received scant appreciation outside a comparatively small circle of readers—albeit they show the highest qualities of intellect, a perfervid imagina-

tion, a trenchant critical faculty, and a marvellous command of language—because of his florid rhetoric, peculiar mannerisms and ambiguities of style. These arise from an all-embracing, subtle, and original process of mental activity, and may be said to be defects of his qualities, but they have proved an effectual barrier to popularity, in the sense that Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Tennyson are popular, and to that extent have his influence and power been diminished. Given something worth saying, an attractive method of saying it will increase its effectiveness.

Style is the golden thread that enriches and brightens the fabric of verse or prose; or it is the stream on whose smiling surface is smoothly borne an argosy freighted with rich gems of thought, and it is pitiable when the stream becomes a Niagara, so that the vessel and its treasure are lost on the rocks amid turbulent foam.

Let us now turn to the subject-matter of this poetry. It deals with infinite shades of human thought and feeling from the exquisitely tender "Mother to Babe," in which we note how beautifully simple he can be, to the great sonnet-like series of poems under the title of "Modern Love." Cleverly, and with sanity of purpose, it treats also of matters social, religious, and political, as, for example, in "The Danger of War," "Martin's Puzzle," "The Old Chartist," "Juggling Jerry," "Jump-to-Glory Jane," and his last sonnet "At the Close," referring to the South African war.

He knows the worth of valour; a spirit of the truest patriotism pervades his work, but he would have us recognise that the brave heart alone cannot guard the home and maintain an empire; "brain, the active brain," is indispensable, and he is not blind to our deficiencies. How truly do the following three lines from "England before the Storm," written in 1891, fit the opening incidents of the present campaign:

"They stand to be her sacrifice,
The sons this mother flings like dice
To face the odds and brave the Fates."

How accurately, too, in his "Napoleon," he describes the type of military leader whose advent recently the nation so anxiously awaited,—

" he of the brain,
"Keen at an enemy's mind to encircle and pierce and constrain,
"Muffling his own for a fate-charged blow very Gods may admire."

A great poet getting at the heart of things can speak for all occasions. The other poems mentioned abound with quaint, sly humour and homely philosophy, striking now and then a deep, pathetic note. In the narrow compass of a paper of this character many extracts cannot find a place, and though "Juggling Jerry" would furnish specimens of our author's best moods, we will refrain from quoting. His "comic eye" was wide open when he wrote this poem. In the poetry there is the same analytical skill as in the novels, and never has it displayed itself in a more finished and admirable manner than in "Modern Love," a poem of fifty stanzas of sixteen lines each, partaking of the nature of the Petrarchan sonnet. They deal with the faithlessness of husband and wife, and without a trace of the erotic suggestiveness which taints the productions of so many French authors who address themselves to this theme. Even Max Nordau could not find a symptom of "sexual psychopathy" here.

It is the tragic side of this phase of life that Meredith, with the most dramatic intenseness, progressively unfolds to our gaze. From the first line to the last, one is enraptured by the precision of language, the penetration into the hidden springs of human motive, his delicate yet firm treatment of a difficult subject, and withal the careful balancing and blending of so many separate details into one harmonious composition. It touches the emotions, as

all great poetry must, but unless it be read with the mind alert its very finest qualities will be missed, and we often require to follow the thought a little further than we have been taken by the writer. Written long before "hill-top" novels were read in the family, or even thought of, thirty-eight years ago, we should almost expect to find a certain amount of direct moralising in deference to our insular prejudices and predilections; but Meredith, aspiring for leadership in the region of literary art, is not affected by the popular likes or dislikes, and chooses to let the drama itself enforce its lessons.

"Modern Love" is probably the most perfect piece of work that Meredith has given us, considered from any standpoint, whether in poetry or prose. In this poem he has combined in the highest degree the richest imagination of the poet with the exactness and accuracy of a well-disciplined scientist and philosopher, and, as a result, we have a masterpiece of literature, stately, powerful, intellectual, and attractive, which will be read when the major portion of his productions shall have sunk into oblivion.

Much of what has been said of "Modern Love" will apply to a great number of Meredith's other poems, but in none is there the same rare combination of excellent features; nor does "Modern Love" indicate what has become the leading characteristic, we might say, of his other work, that is the Earth-worship, so constantly taught and observed.

In the volume of 1862 occurs "The Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn," and there he seems to touch upon his own special subject for the first time. In a high lyrical strain he sings of the fruits of autumn and the voices of the woods; it is the time when the glorious south-west draws

"From heaven the disenchanted harmony
To join Earth's laughter in the midnight blind";

It is the time, too, when the trees shed their leaves ; but—happy thought!—they refuse to fall, and the poet's eye beholds them.

"Great armies in imperial dyes,
And mad to tread the air and rise,
The savage freedom of the skies,
To taste before they rot."

Oft does he hear and "join earth's laughter." He tells of her love, for she is a mother of kindness. Green, bounteous Earth! How he rejoices in her, lives in her mirthful heart, and shrinks not from her when death threatens! She is to him "our good Great-Mother," for it is

"The humming burden of Earth's toil to feed
Her creatures all, her task to speed their growth,
Her aim to lead them up her pathways, shown
Between the Pains and Pleasures."

Then how forgetful she is of her offspring's crimes, for on the field of battle, "where bled her children, hangs now the loaded sheaf." Hence should we obey her laws, trust her, love her, reverence her—yea, worship her. This is Meredith's message to mankind.

It has been said that his predecessors have in the main sung the spirit of nature ; he sings her body, which is the earth as well—"this Earth of the beautiful breasts." This point has been well brought out by another critic, who ingeniously contrasts Meredith's "Lark Ascending" with Shelley's and Wordsworth's poems, entitled "To a Skylark." He writes : "When Shelley addresses the skylark, the bird's notes are lost in a tempest of gorgeous poetical imagination.

"Hail to thee, blithe spirit—
Bird thou never wert."

is his invocation. The bird ceases to be a bird, and becomes the spirit of the poet's dream. With Wordsworth the skylark is the vehicle for a moral reflection, beautiful

and appropriate no doubt, but absolutely unrealistic. What touches is the lesson the bird conveys as he rises over his nest. How different is the modern singer's invocation!

"He rises and begins a round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur, and shake."

Realism has invaded poetry. His is the real skylark, the bird itself, not the ideal that the song has put into the poet's brain."

Comparative criticism is a dangerous procedure when it results in the exaltation of one man at the expense of others. Shelley and Wordsworth both found what they sought, and finely expressed it. Meredith has done likewise; but the suggestion that he has done better when our critic cries, "How different!" is a matter about which there may be considerable difference of opinion. The point, however, is that Meredith's poetry, if it be not a contradiction of terms, so to state it, is largely informed with a spirit of realism. In the highest and best sense he is deliberately realistic, for he strives to learn the facts that he may know Earth's mysteries. With him "the road to the soul is the real," and he has found that when "we read aright and devoutly serve,"

" . . . This love of Earth reveals
A soul beside our own to quicken, quell,
Irradiate, and through ruinous floods uplift."

Can we read aright? The answer is "Never is earth misread by brain." And better still if the triple power of "blood, brain, and spirit" can be brought into action. This is a power Meredith has in command, and he has accordingly produced some of the most profound and interesting Nature-poetry in the language.

The volume entitled "A Reading of Earth" furnishes
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word-painting of the highest kind : witness the poem "The South-Wester," and in such productions as "Hard Weather," "A Faith on Trial," we learn much of his philosophy, for he is not alone a singer, but also a great teacher. A close perusal of the poems, however, is necessary to obtain a full idea of the scope and aim of their teaching. Meredith, as a student of nature, has laboured hard, wrestled hard, to use his own term, and triumphed mightily. Verily, he has won the wreath of the victor in this arena.

Fascinating as it might be, we cannot now enter upon a detailed analysis of any of his principal poems. The mystical "Woods of the Westermains," the ode "To the Comic Spirit," "Melampus," "The Nuptials of Attila," the sonnets, and other poems previously mentioned, would well repay examination.

We must pass over, also, the question of his metres, except to remark, in the words of a reviewer, "he has written in several exceptionally difficult metres with great success ; he has footed the tight-rope of the Galliambic measure, and the swaying planks of various trochaic experiments, and every now and then, without warning, in the midst of simple, easy-going tune, he will break time." The Galliambic measure occurs in "Phaëthôn," and is admittedly an experiment, for in a note to the poem the author himself says : "A perfect conquest of the measure is not possible in our tongue. For the sake of an occasional success in the velocity, sweep, volume of the line it seems worth an effort ; and if, to some degree, serviceable for narrative, it is one of the exercises of a writer which readers may be invited to share."

In conclusion, it may be said that Meredith is a poet, in many respects, of the first rank. His matter is always good, and were it not for his too-frequent lapses from the paths of strict literary rectitude, to which attention has been

drawn, we should be inclined to say to him, "Friend, come up higher, for thou art worthy a seat with the greatest." He invariably grips his subject, and in turn grips his reader. As a poet of man, or, more precisely, of man's life as manifested in the outward act, he sees little but the tragic side. Man's mind he knows as few do, but to him man's life would seem to be a melancholy spectacle. There is more of human passion, human despair, than of love and the joy of living in his poetry. He is truer and deeper as a Nature-poet. He loves "with love exceeding a simple love" insects, birds, and flowers, while the south-west wind and the fleeting clouds are a perennial joy and source of inspiration. Ofttimes he bewilders us by his circumlocution, and amazes us by fantastic tricks of speech; but, still, he has given us exhilarating, rapturous, thought-stimulating verse, into which he has infused the magic of his powerful intellect. While he does not forget to sing, he does not forget that what is said or sung is the main thing in the end. This it is which gives lasting qualities and solidity to his work. His is no decadent spirit; his writing is always virile, replete with lofty conceptions, and full of dramatic force. Were the tendency otherwise, his close communing and intimacy with Nature and Mother Earth would supply the requisite corrective and stimulus to progress. They who know Nature in her secret recesses and apply her lessons aright go on from strength to strength. Meredith yielded himself to her early in his career, and he remains her faithful lover, serving her with a devotion that not even death may destroy.

"For every elemental power
Is kindred to our hearts, and once
Acknowledged, wedded, once embraced,
Once taken to the unfettered sense,
Once claspt unto the naked life,
The union is eternal."



THE ROMANCE OF THE RITTER VON STAUFENBERG.

BY LAURENCE CLAY.

ROMANCE, like sentiment, mostly escapes definition, but we know and approve both, and when either mantles life, then is life enriched. But both—first cousins—are bloom, volatile, treasure in earthen vessels. We need to tend their welfare, for they are not wholly without the spiritual side of our nature. Like some flowers that in time change their habitat and accustomed manifestation, romance here flourishes, there changes or dies down, and always some of its flowers are in danger of being lost. In the romance of the Ritter Peter von Staufenberg we have a cameo of the times long antecedent to that of the romanticists of the Middle Ages; it is a romance of the age of the minnesingers and the trouvères. As such it is interesting in itself, and perhaps more so as the ultimate source from whence sprang the "motiv" of De La Motte Fouqué's delightful story "Undine"; indeed the latter is the chief, and at the same time, sufficient claim that it has upon our attention. Fouqué tells us in his preface to "Undine" that it was in "the mystical laboratory of the aged whimsical Paracelsus" that this "darling gift" of his muse first arose.

Scherer, in his "History of German Literature," says that the poem having reference to the Knight of Staufen-

berg was composed by one Eckenolt about 1300. The story was certainly crystallized into metrical form long before the day of Paracelsus, who died in 1541, having compassed the amazing task of writing some 350 books, large and small, and mainly books of philosophy and medicine (?). Before his day the word "undine" was unknown to the German tongue, but Paracelsus seemed to know the article intimately. He says, they have "souls, but no spiritual principle." Upon what principle, spiritual or otherwise, this fine distinction is made doth not appear. He goes on to say that the human shape is their true form, and that they may attain to the spiritual principle by entering into union with man. They are not immortal, but perish like animals, are subject to diseases, and "are kindly disposed towards men." How subtilely affectionate! But, mark you, they have an aversion to "self-opinionated men and conceited persons!" One could almost suspect evidence of a soul *with* "spiritual principle" in such discernment. Paracelsus' book on "Elemental Spirits," from which these references are taken, was translated into English and published in London in the year 1650. It is full of nostrums for the making of gold, for rejuvenation, and for the elixir of life, etc. These are not to our present purpose, so that we will dismiss Paracelsus without further comment, inasmuch as the real source of Fouqué's story is dated some two hundred years behind Paracelsus, and has, it would appear, some sort of foundation in fact.

In the town library at Strassburg there is a volume of ancient manuscripts in old German. Some of these are dated, of which the oldest is a book of fables of the year 1411. One of the undated manuscripts is, for various reasons, manifestly older than the one dated 1411. Its subject is the romance of the Ritter Peter von Staufenberg, related in some sixteen leaves of rhymed couplets.

It is upon this and subsequent printed variants that Fouqué's story really rests.

It is known to history that the knight Peter von Staufenberg was living in the year 1274, and he is traceable as being still alive in 1287. With regard to the manuscript itself, we are informed that there is a general consensus of opinion among skilled German philologists that it should be dated about the year 1300. They are guided in their opinion partly by the character of the irregular rhymes in the manuscript, characteristic of that period and even earlier, and partly by the form of the name of the scene of the story, which form is known to have become modified in much later years. The manuscript was early printed; the earliest copies, however, are undated. Three or four copies of this earliest printed edition are known to be in existence—one is reputed to be in England. It is suggested by the chief authority, Englehardt, that they were printed about 1480 or 1482 by one Martin Schott in Strassburg. A later edition was edited by Fischart, and printed and published by Bernhardt Joblin in Strassburg in 1588, and other editions have since appeared in Germany, including a lithograph of the manuscript itself, published in Berlin in 1823 by Engelhardt. The full title of the poem, taken from the earliest printed copy, runs thus: "The genuine and true legend of the proud, strong, and adventurous knight Herr Peter Diemringer of Staufenberg of Ortenowe, of his doings and adventures in many countries, of his love and engagement to a water-nymph, of his death in his prime because he did not follow the good and true advice of this nymph and broke his undertaking."

How far this use of the word legend suggests a date more widely separating in point of time the Ritter Peter alive in 1284, from 1300, the assigned date of the MS., must be left to the philologist.

The text of this manuscript tells how the knight was the Admirable Crichton of his day, good, generous, brave, and of noble carriage. A great traveller, invincible in the many tournaments in which he took part, a crusader, and—adored by the ladies. A scholar, in that he could both read and write, possessed of some skill with the harp and the voice, and a knight with almost an European reputation; truly a noble knight, “*sans peur, sans reproche!*” Such was the prototype of that lesser man, the Huldbrand of Fouqué’s book.

One day he instructed his page to have his horse caparisoned, he would ride to Nusbach to pray and to confession. On his way thither the knight met a supernaturally beautiful damsel seated upon a rock by the wayside. She was resplendent in a jewelled robe, and had a wealth of golden hair. All beautiful heroines of this and many other ages have a profusion of golden hair.

The knight greeted her in the name of God, and seated himself by her side, the page removing to a discreet distance. Affectionate conversation ensued, and the marvellous was related since she informed the knight that, unknown to him, she had in all his great career, shadowed and protected him. We said the marvellous, and we have not even yet outlived all belief in our good angels.

The proposal from the knight that the maiden (fair archetype of sweet Undine!) should become his wife is met by the earnest and impressive reply that if at any subsequent time he should love another, within three days thereafter he would die. She bade him pause and think before replying. The knight evidently reflected, for he asked: “Girl, is your story true?” “Yes,” she replied; “God is my witness.”

Ultimately a kiss and an exchange of finger-rings sealed the contract, and they parted, but not before she had com-

mended the knight "to ride with God." The knight proceeded to Nusbach, and at Mass he gave himself body, soul, and honour to the Lord of Heaven, and laid a gold coin upon the altar. Thereafter, did the knight but strongly will it, the damsel came to him in a supernatural way, unseen of all but him, and he apparently remained a bachelor.

We will pass over minor points, and briefly relate the denouement. The maiden had specially warned the knight more than once against heeding the advice of his friends that he should marry, and the knight had always promised life-long fealty to his beloved, and, doubtless, in sincerity.

The time came for the coronation of the prince to whom the knight owed allegiance. There were great celebrations at Frankfurt in progress, and the Ritter von Staufenberg attended, accompanied by a goodly array of thirty armed servants with numerous horses gorgeously caparisoned. As the days went by, the knight carried all before him at the tournaments, and he became the cynosure of all eyes, the one subject of conversation of spectators and competitors alike.

The delighted king (the bishops in close attendance) sent for the knight, and offered him the castle and lands of Kerden, and, further, the king had a rich and lovely ward, a maiden of eighteen summers—she, too, shall be the knight's. The latter was dumb, hence all were astonished. The king assured him that he was in earnest, and little suspected that the knight wished that he were not. The king, bishops, and nobles pressed for the reason of such unexpected contumacy, and the knight confessed all—his meeting with the maiden, his first and only love, and his bond not to marry—nay, he ingenuously confessed the supernatural condition of their relationship.

It was a grand and unique opportunity for the bishops,

and they rose to the occasion and promptly declared the union an unhallowed one, of the devil, etc. Even the chronicler is prompted at length to exclaim: "What is the use to tell more of what the bishops told him?" Need we say that they prevailed? The knight, with heavy heart, assented, and proclamation was made, and the date of the marriage fixed. The knight secured a promise that the betrothed should follow him home to his castle, and then departed with his retinue. Arrived within his own halls, his heart yearned for his true love, and she was with him in a moment. There was no angry recrimination, only, from her, a deeply sorrowful expression of regret, and one last sad warning; from him—why the bishops had carefully instructed him to call her names, to call her a devil, and, in his despair at the doom that he felt awaited him, he called her "devil," and she was gone. Gone! But not before she had told him that she would give him a sign in order that he might seek the timely benefit of clergy and prepare for death. She would show him, and the company assembled at the marriage feast, her foot in some unexpected and marvellous manner.

The fateful day duly came, as fateful days do to all. The company were assembled, and all progressed merrily enough, except for the load at the heart of the bridegroom. Then, during a temporary lull in the hilarity, a noise was heard aloft, and a foot and leg up to the knee appeared through the ceiling—a foot whiter than ivory, and of such complexion and shapeliness as was never before seen on earth, says the chronicler.

The knight cried out: "Oh, my loved friends, you have injured me and yourselves! In three days I must die!"

The upper chamber was searched, but no trace of an intruder was found, and the feast broke up in disorder and

depression, many, including the bride, being reduced to tears.

The knight spent the remainder of his time in prayer in the company of his brother, and, while he yet prayed, *his heart broke!*

After he was buried his bride "got her to a nunnery," and spent the remainder of her days praying for the soul of the knight—he whom all men mourned in sincere sorrow.

The last couplet runs, piously enough:

"Now we are at an end,
May God give us his blessings. Amen."

Such is the oldest form of this historico-story; variants of it appeared as already stated. We have traced one, dated Strassburg, 1595, and reprinted in a book of German Volkslieder published at Mannheim in 1834. It is a totally different text as far as the diction is concerned, and the irregular rhyming couplets have blossomed into six-line stanzas of trochaic tetrameter. The poem is divided into seven "Romanzen," these being sections of unequal length. Each stanza consists of three couplets. So much for the structure, which had doubtless shared in the general advance in learning consequent upon the renaissance of the fifteenth century. Coming to the text, it is in some respects decidedly superior to the original. It is notably less crude, and is not without embellishments. One or two points meet with some explication. It is as a whole more pleasing, and forms a more finished and interesting romance. The main incidents are repeated, and points of detail re-appear in such a way as to at once declare its source is the older printed editions or the manuscript. The title is cut down, but it emphasizes one point, namely, the fact that the heroine is a "Meerfei" or water-nymph—an undine.

The opening stanzas indicate, also, that the knight had often met her in his dreams; he tells her so. This some-

what tones down the sudden declaration of his love at first sight. There is, of course, the same sweet inexorableness of her demand of the knight that, since she is ever his, he must ever and absolutely be hers, and hers alone. It is the fond hope of many a woman's heart to-day that the man to whom she accords a whole-souled undeviating devotion should place the same sacrifice on the altar of love, for *she* gives her all.

In this variant there is the addition that, previous to the coronation at Frankfurt, the knight's brother had for family reasons pressed him to marry; but, declared the knight, "it is impossible, I have set my mind upon glory and honour." The lady to whom the king affiances the knight is here said to be the king's own cousin and the mistress of the tournament; and she it is at whose hands the knight receives his guerdon. It is a wreath of gold and pearls, and one Romanzen relates how the king's cousin put it on the knight's head (covered with yellow hair, of course) with her own hands, and by the gentle pressure of her fingers, aided by the language of her lovely eyes, tried to make him understand her kindling love. A truly sprightly addition, born of a knowledge of human nature. The story improves as it matures.

The same collocation between the king, the bishops, and the knight is related, and the same result, though the interview between the "Meerfei" and the knight immediately on his return to his castle is painted in even more sad and sorrowful colours. The deep regret at the approaching end of their love and his life is emphasized. The colours are altogether stronger, the feasts and the tourneys at the knight's marriage are more gaily painted, though, oddly enough, the supernatural foot which appeared through the ceiling is now depicted as a *man's* foot. Perhaps the bishops had again been talking! The alteration does not

aid the effect, and one must shyly confess that it damps the interest a trifle.

But the effect is aided in the next stanza, where the attendants, upon the appearance of the foot, are made to bring the knight a crystal glass full of wine. Into this he looks, sees somewhat, and turns pale. What he sees within the crystal is a sleeping child with outstretched foot. He then declared his doom, and the consequent revulsion in the feelings of the guests and their premature dispersion is vividly portrayed.

One other point is worth noting. It is interesting and, in its suggestion, beautiful. The newly-made wife after the funeral, as in the older version, enters a nunnery, but it is here stated that her prayers on the knight's behalf were so fervent that the "Meerfei" came often and joined her prayers, and spoke with her of the knight. We think there is a touch of poetic genius in that addition.

In both versions there is a certain sensuousness, even voluptuousness in parts, though in neither for its own sake apparently, and it is much toned down in the later version. It is somewhat customary to excuse this sort of veniality to the 16th century even in this country.

It would be an interesting task to endeavour to sift from this story the wheat from the chaff, the true from the false, but it is not our present purpose. It is certain that the knight lived, for documents relating to matters of his estate are still extant and bear his signature, and other facts of his life are also known. But of the particular circumstances which relate to what there is every reason to believe was a sad end to a renowned career, we shall not know more than we can gather from the story, fact from fiction. Doubtless there was concerned in it a beautiful bride, and probably, also, the tragedy involved in faithlessness issuing in broken

hearts. Still more interesting were it to examine how Fouqué, with true poetic genius, has transformed this somewhat crude, yet interesting and not wholly senseless, story into one of the most seductive and refined romances known to modern literature—a romance beautiful in its subject, in its setting, in its proportions and execution. It is a bright example of that transfusion into gold of baser metal when it is passed through the alembic of the brain of a man of genius. The remark of Froude that "both the *Nibelungen Lied* as well as "*Undine*" are of Suabian origin" is worth quoting. When we contrast the strenuous, lurid, and Wagnerian effects of the one with the delicacy, the grace, and beauty of the other, we feel we have the opposite ends of the scale of humanity, the whole gamut of passion in between, and recognise the great effect that Latin grace may achieve (for Fouqué was of Huguenot descent) when grafted on Teutonic strength.

Carlyle accorded Fouqué the title of "a man of genius with little more than the ordinary share of talent," and when we contemplate the perfection and beauty of his romance, "*Undine*," we admit the genius, and quarrel not with the talent which was but the tool that aided that achievement we all applaud.





SOME RECENT GARDEN LITERATURE.

BY GEORGE H. BELL.

IT is a matter of common knowledge that the love of Nature, in all its varied forms, has developed considerably within the present century. What was "caviare to the general" a hundred years ago is to-day widely known and highly appreciated. Regions which were then neglected and practically untrodden, are to-day, by general consent, regarded as the playgrounds of the world, and to interfere in any way with their natural beauty is considered, and justly so, as the grossest vandalism.

The pleasure which arises from the contemplation of the beautiful in Nature is an all-embracing one. It finds ample scope in the highest Alp or the solitary mountain tarn, and is ministered to by the glories of the tropical forest and by the meanest flower that blows. The memory of hours spent with Nature is cherished by many among their most treasured possessions, but there is every reason to believe that our grandfathers would have considered such hours as wasted and but ill calculated to help us in the battle of life. To-day we have changed all this, and are constantly endeavouring to cultivate in our children a love for Nature in all her aspects, recognising that

"'Tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy."

It would be interesting to trace the steps by which so great a change has been effected, but this does not fall within the scope of the present paper.

As in all great movements, there has been a very gradual development. A few men with a keener perception for the beautiful than their contemporaries acted as pioneers. Others have followed them, until the track has become so well-marked that all may venture who feel so inclined.

What our English Lake-land owes to men like the poet Gray; Scotland to Sir Walter Scott; or natural history, in its widest sense, to Gilbert White, Henry David Thoreau or Wordsworth; that the Garden owes to Lord Bacon, Pope, Addison, and Walpole. Through them we may say, in Thoreau's words:

"I hearing got who had but ears,
And sight who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern who knew but learning's lore."

These men, and such as they, made garden literature possible for they recognised the infinite beauty of that world by which we are surrounded, and of which the garden forms but one small part. They inspired the writers of such books as come under the heading of garden literature, and they influenced that portion of the reading world which has derived pleasure from the perusal of their works.

It must not, however, for a moment be imagined that nothing had been written on the subject prior to the time of Pope. A glance at the "Praise of Gardens," by Mr. A. F. Sieveking, will show us that so far back as B.C. 1300 writers had discoursed of the garden in all its glory. From that remote period until the present time there has been a constant succession of writers, both in prose and verse, who have found in the garden a congenial subject for their pens, and the list of authors from whom Sieveking quotes,

includes men so far removed from one another in time and style as Homer, and Erasmus, Martin Luther, Pepys, Francis Bacon, and Alfred Austin. These prose-writings were, however, mainly incidental, whilst the motive of the poems, as Henry Bright points out, "was not the flower itself, but the Anthea, the Sappho, or the Julia to whom the flowers were to teach a lesson of the power of love or the uncertainty of life."

Books innumerable treating of the technicalities of gardening have also been published. For our purposes these may be classed among Charles Lamb's "books which are no books," and be put on the shelf, together with "Court calendars, directories, almanacs, Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley's 'Moral Philosophy.'"

Gardening books may be defined as only of interest to those who possess a garden and care for the cultivation of it, whilst garden literature is equally acceptable to the owner of Wilton or the dweller in the humblest town flat. It also covers a much wider field than the mere technicalities of horticulture. Its starting-point, certainly, is the garden, but it may, and probably does, wander into the domains of literature, art, science, and even political economy. Some of these subjects are so nearly akin to the garden, as Mr. George Milner, the author of "Country Pleasures" has shown us, that they are habitually linked together, and it is almost an impossibility in some minds to think of one apart from the other. There are others which spring naturally from the garden, and the transition is so easy that one fails to notice the dividing hedge.

Within the past few years there has been a marked increase in the publication of such books as would come within the scope of this paper. Many of them are but repetitions, treating of the same subjects in similar methods,

but under slightly varying conditions. It is needful here, as elsewhere, to make a judicious selection.

It might seem almost a work of supererogation to refer at any length to the first book on my list—Mr. Milner's "Country Pleasures: The Chronicle of a Year, chiefly in a Garden"—because the book is so well known. The conditions under which it was written are not of the most favourable nature. Moston, breezy and healthful as it is, cannot, from a gardener's point of view, be regarded as an ideal neighbourhood. Whatever its beauties may have been fifty years ago, to-day "Ichabod" is written largely over its surface. When you wander about its somewhat doleful lanes in quest of the garden which you seem to know so well, you are more than ever impressed with the force of that individuality which rose above all these externals and produced a book which, from all internal evidence, might have been written beneath the oaks of Selborne, or within sight of the fir trees of Eversley. Many books have been written on the subject since "Country Pleasures" was first published; but although it has had a host of imitators, it has had no rival, and it still continues to be a source of pleasure to all Nature lovers, but especially to those whose lot it is to live in smoke-begrimed cities. That it has been included in the Silver Library by Messrs. Longmans is proof sufficient, if proof were needed, of its sustained popularity. There is every temptation to dwell upon the charm which "Country Pleasures" possesses—the great variety of subjects with which the author deals, its wealth of imagery, of literary allusion and direct quotation, but, however fitting this might be in another place, here, at any rate, it would infer a lack of appreciation which cannot exist.

"A Year in a Lancashire Garden," by Henry A. Bright, appeared originally in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*. The
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garden described lies within the smoke limit of Liverpool, and the author adopted a favourite order for his chapters, treating each month of the various flowers as they appeared. The book, he says, was intended for those who love gardens, and not for those with a professional knowledge. As one would expect from a friend of the late Lord Houghton, his pages are full of happy quotation and allusion. Homer, Horace, Herrick, Swinburne, Tennyson, Bryant, and many others are laid under contribution, and furnish their abundant illustrations to his text. No flower appears, but it seems to remind him of some line or another, and, as a rule, his quotations are singularly appropriate. Here is one for the daffodil, a flower which has been much praised in verse, and which at once suggests at least two well-known poems. Bright quotes from Jean Ingelow's "Persephone," and the lines possibly may not be so well known as those of Herrick or Wordsworth:

"The daffodils were fair to see,
They nodded lightly on the lea,
Persephone, Persephone,
Lo! one she marked of fairer growth
Than orchis or anemone;
For it the maiden left them both,
And parted from her company.
Drawn nigh she deemed it fairer still,
And stooped to gather by the rill
The daffodil, the daffodil."

"My auriculas," he says, "are not so good as they should be in a Lancashire garden, for of all flowers it is the old Lancashire favourite. It is well known as the basier—a corruption of bear's ear—and a pretty Lancashire ballad ends every verse with the refrain:

"For the basiers are sweet in the morning of May."

He closes his book with a short note on "Flowers and the Poets," which was originally published in the *Athe-*

næum. Cowley's love of a garden, he considers, was that of a horticulturist, and among true garden-loving poets he ranks Andrew Marvell very high. He thinks that the love of flowers in Shakespeare, Milton, and Herrick was much greater than their exact knowledge of them. "A Year in a Lancashire Garden" is written in a simple, unaffected style, and one closes it with the feeling that it is the work of a cultivated enthusiast. His knowledge of his subject is full and accurate, and he has the power of imparting that knowledge in a lucid and agreeable manner.

Men vary in their opinions as to the place in our literature which the poetry of Mr. Alfred Austin, the present Laureate, will ultimately occupy. He has, however, produced two prose works which entitle him to the gratitude of all Nature worshippers. In "The Garden that I Love" and "In Veronica's Garden" we are introduced to the home of the poet, and an exceedingly beautiful one we find it. If the author of "Country Pleasures" wrote in spite of his environments, the Laureate's surroundings are of the most favourable character. Situate in the heart of Kent, the Garden of England, yet within easy distance of London, Swinford Old Manor House has the advantage of position. The description which Austin gives of the house and its surroundings, apart from the admirable illustrations with which both books abound, makes one sympathise with the poet in his determination to secure it as a permanent resting-place, and one feels but little sympathy for the would-be tenant who, for so small a consideration, parted with his opportunity. Unlike Farringford, it is an old manor house, and when the poet first saw it, was almost entirely smothered in creepers. "Four hundred generations of swallows," he says, "and house-martins and starlings. Think of that! They were building there when Shakespeare wrote the lines"

"This guest of summer,
 The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
 By his bold masonry, that the heaven's breath
 Smells wooingly here. No jutting frieze or buttress,
 No coign of vantage, but this bird hath made
 His pendent bed and procreant cradle, where they
 Most breed and haunt, I have observed the air
 Is delicate."

The Laureate lays claim to no great knowledge of flowers or their ways. He describes his work in the garden, and you feel as you read that, to a great extent, he was a learner. He had, of course, the artistic instinct and that eye for natural beauty with which we are inclined to credit all poets, but of gardening knowledge proper he had no great store. He set out, however, on certain fixed lines, from which the following are selected :

It is with me a cardinal dogma that a garden, to deserve the name, must abound in flowers, not in one nook or corner, but everywhere, from at least the day of All Fools to the day of All Saints.

Gardening is a partnership with Nature, in which the senior partner exercises the principal authority. Senior partners of long standing are said to be rather queer and crusty at times, and by virtue of their larger experience do what seems to the juniors the oddest things, and I will not deny that Nature in spring is occasionally rather short in her temper, when her stock-in-trade is subject to daily fluctuations.

Over and above fostering equanimity, the cultivation of a garden promotes the tender graces, and extends the sweet charities of life. I need no introduction to the person who has a garden.

Long before we have finished the book we are not only familiar with the old manor house garden, its rosary, its giant oak-tree, its lawn and orchard, but have also made the acquaintance of the Martha-like Veronica, Lamia, and the poet, whose lines, whether worthy or not to rank with those of his immediate predecessor, are at least in harmony with the place, and the book and the general air of the lotus-eating summer evenings.

"In Veronica's Garden" is practically a continuation of the "Garden that I Love," with the same scenes and the same *dramatis personæ*. It also contains some excellent illustrations of the Manor House and gardens, but, like many other continuations, it does not possess the same interest as the Laureate's first book.

Anthony Hope's father, the rector of St. Bride's, Fleet Street, tells us of a London 'bus driver who is reputed to have wondered "how parsons filled in their time on week-days." Canon Ellacombe's "In a Gloucestershire Garden" offers a solution, for his garden must have found him plenty of work. Situate at Bitton, near Bristol, its locality is a favourable one, and many trees and shrubs will flourish there which would only exist in our northern latitudes. Then again, a rectory garden possesses one great advantage in the fixity of tenure under which the parson cultivates it. And this reminds one of pleasant parsonage gardens all over England—of Eversley, of Selborne, a typical parson's garden, though White's was not the actual parsonage garden, of Bemerton, and, nearer home, of Old Alderley or Arncliffe:

"In the deep fork of Amerdale."

The Canon writes:

Of all associations which flowers keep for us, none can equal those connected with persons or places—of the way in which flowers bring back the memory of friends little can be said—in the pleasures they thus bring they must vary according to the memories they recall, and in not a few cases these memories must be full of sadness and sorrow. But the memories of places which flowers bring back to us must always be more or less pleasant, and to pick flowers or collect plants in various places, and then to be able to grow them in our own gardens, adds much to the pleasure of travelling. My beech-fern recalls Cader Idris to me, and my oak-fern *Snowdonia*. My *osmunda* recalls North Donegal and the Slieve League, not because my plants came from there, but because I never saw them so beautiful elsewhere. My *saxifrages* recall Switzerland, and my pinks the Castle of Falaise.

And these memories and associations which our flowers give us are independent of seasons and of age. They come to us as well in autumn and winter, in spring and summer; and as to age, the older we get, the more, from the very nature of things, do these memories increase and multiply.

Canon Ellacombe's words will find an echo in the heart of many a garden lover. To me they recall an old-fashioned garden away in the fertile vale of Mowbray. I call it an old-fashioned garden because it was mainly stocked with old-fashioned flowers, such as find no welcome in the modern gardener's eyes, and, if allowed to exist at all, do so on sufferance and in some remote corner. Here they occupied the place of honour, and showed by their vigour and luxuriance how well they deserved it. The garden was not entirely given up to flowers, for within its boundaries you could, in the season, gather a dozen different kinds of fruit from its walls, and the old monthly rose twined in and out among the greengage branches in closest friendship. It is true that the trim box-edgings had been taken up, and the loose gravel walks had been replaced by grass; but its owner was never fully reconciled to the change, and resolutely set her face against further innovations. "The old lady," a title of love and respect dating back to the twelfth century, according to Freeman, had an intimate acquaintance with every flower and shrub in the garden, and well she might, for many of them had been known to her upwards of sixty years, and each spring she had watched for their coming and enjoyed their beauty. More than half a century had passed since she first planted the heath which now flourished in its half-crescent bed and continually overran its border. Fifty years of light and shade! but, despite its years, it continued to flourish, and was a source of joy to her children's children. To most of the plants a history attached. Many of them had been gifts from old friends, slips and cuttings brought home and

carefully reared, so that there was a personality attached to the flowers which caused one to anticipate their annual re-appearance, and regard them with an affection which was not entirely their own. So it was that whilst our town gardens were bare and cold, this old-fashioned garden was literally full of flowers growing in rich profusion, and apparently conscious of their fixity of tenure.

There is a verse in Winthrop Mackworth Praed's "Every Day Characters" which would aptly describe Mrs. Earle's "Pot Pourri from a Surrey Garden."

"His talk was like a stream which runs,
With rapid change, from rocks to roses;
It slipped from politics to puns;
It passed from Mahomet to Moses,
Beginning with the laws that keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses."

Mrs. Earle is an enthusiastic gardener, but she does not confine her observations to the garden. She wanders at will into the nursery or the kitchen, and is equally at home in the management of seedlings or of sons. She discusses the training of her rose trees and her children, and she treats of saxifrages or of salads with a charming impartiality. If we were disposed to be critical, we might place the "Pot Pourri" among the gardening books; but Mrs. Earle does occasionally enrich her pages from the outside. Indeed, she apologises for her many quotations, and does so very gracefully in the following extract from Emerson:

"The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearl to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,

And brought my sea-born treasures home,
But the poor unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar."

"I feel these lines," she says, "reproach me for my many quotations," but in spite of this, she closes her book with a quatrain from Omar Khayyam. The "Pot Pourri" has the minor advantage of being printed on excellent paper and in clear type with a good margin. It also contains a comprehensive list of books on gardening. Mrs. Earle's second venture, "More Pot Pourri from a Surrey Garden," is very similar in style to the first, and is practically an enlargement of it. In it the authoress is careful to atone for one omission, and records her appreciation of "Country Pleasures, chiefly in a Garden."

Enthusiasm may exist without much knowledge, and theory devoid of practice will often find itself at sea, but when to a fervid enthusiasm is joined a knowledge which combines both the theory and practice of the art, the outcome is a gardener indeed. If to such a man is given the pen of a ready writer and a naturally pretty wit which has been sharpened by long companionship with the first humourists of the day, we have an almost unique combination. In Dean Hole we have such a man, and his pages are always welcome and never dull. There is at times, perhaps, a tendency to over-much practical detail (I am not here speaking of his purely technical books), but with a wealth of story, of literary allusion, and a rich humour, which constantly bursts out, the Dean endears himself to all lovers of garden literature. "Our Gardens," published in 1899, is not cast in the same form as the majority of the books I have referred to. It opens with a fairly comprehensive history of gardening, and then treats of the garden in its several parts, as the "Rose

Garden," the "Rock Garden," the "Town Garden," and each chapter is lightened by touches of humour, many of which are worthy of the friend and companion of John Leech. There is no fear of the very reverend gentleman omitting the practical portion of his work; but, altogether apart from this, there is quite sufficient in "Our Gardens" of general interest and of very pleasant reading.

"Elizabeth and her German Garden" and "A Solitary Summer" are from the pen of the same writer, and may be taken together. They both treat of a garden in Germany, but they treat of many things beside the garden. Of books, of German manners and customs, of the German army as it affects the rural life of the country, of the scenery on the Baltic coast, and of many kindred topics. As Sergeant Bagnet called his children after the towns in which they were born, so Elizabeth calls her children after the months April, May, and June; and her husband, who is not particularly prominent, is only known to the reader as the Man of Wrath. She freely criticizes her German guests, both civil and military, and regrets that some are blind to the beauties of the landscape, and in its most exquisite scenes will descant on the merits of a new savoury, or the virtues of their Berlin chef. She reads Thoreau in the open air, Boswell by the fireside. "In the afternoon," she says, "I potter in the garden with Goethe. In the evening, when every thing is tired and quiet, I sit with Walt Whitman by the rosebeds." Among her belongings is a goodly array of books.

"What a medley of books there is about my pillar," she writes. "Here is Jane Austin leaning against Heine—what would she have said to that, I wonder?—with Miss Mitford and Cranford to keep her in countenance on the other side. Here are Ruskin, Lubbock, White, Izaak Walton, Drummond, Herbert Spencer (only as much of him as I hope I

understand, and am afraid I do not), Walter Pater, Matthew Arnold, Thoreau, Lewis Carroll, O. W. Holmes, Hawthorne, 'Wuthering Heights,' Lamb's 'Essays,' Johnson's 'Lives,' Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne, Gibbon, the immortal Pepys, the egregious Boswell."

Of the special books which we are now considering she says: "These gardening books are an unfailing delight, especially in winter, when to sit by my blazing fire with the snow driving past my window and read the luscious description of roses and all the other summer glories is one of my greatest pleasures. And then, how well I know and love those gardens whose gradual development has been described by their owners, and how happily I wander in fancy down the paths of certain specially charming ones in Lancashire, Berkshire, Surrey, and Kent, and admire the beautiful arrangement of bed and border and the charming bits in unexpected corners, and all the evidences of untiring love." Elizabeth, who, at the commencement of her career, had much to learn about her garden, is at her best when describing it. There is a tendency in the other part of her work to strain after smartness, and some of the phrases have the appearance of affectation.

"Wood and Garden," by Gertrude Jekyll, was also published in 1899. It is very largely given up to the details of horticulture, but it contains a very interesting chapter on the "Worship of False Gods," a reference to the absurd way in which certain flowers have been cultivated for the flower show, and have thereby lost almost all their original beauty. One feels that this is such a perversion of the word "cultivation" that one cannot inveigh too strongly against its continuance. That an exquisite flower, such as the old-fashioned auricula or pansy should be seized by the gardener and despoiled both of its beauty of form and of colour in order that it may be gradually twisted into some-

thing of an extraordinary character, and so secure a prize, is almost incredible, but visitors to any of our great flower shows, especially those devoted to special flowers, will not have failed to notice what Miss Jekyll aptly calls the "worship of the false." I make one extract only from "Wood and Garden," because it so fairly represents what one has so often thought.

"In summer time one never fully knows how beautiful are the forms of the deciduous trees. It is only in winter when they are bare of leaves that one can fully enjoy their splendid structure and design, their admirable qualities of duly apportioned strength and grace of poise, and the spread of the many-branched head has its equivalent in the wide-reaching ground-grasp of the root."

"The Praise of Gardens," by Albert H. Sieveking, was first published in 1885, but the second edition, published in 1899, is much fuller, and is also embellished by some excellent illustrations of various styles of gardens, portraits of distinguished gardeners, and plans of many notable gardens. Broadly speaking, it bears the same relationship to gardening that Alexander Ireland's "Booklovers' Enchiridion" does to reading, and is mainly taken up, as its title implies, with selections from various writers in praise of gardens. These selections extend over an unusually long period, and are culled from all sorts and conditions of writers, and are, perhaps, more valuable for the avenues of reading which they open up than for the extracts themselves. The book also contains a Historical Epilogue, which is a brief history of gardening from the earliest times, and treats in some detail of the claims of the two great rival schools—the Formal and the Natural. For all who are desirous of becoming familiar with garden literature in its widest ranges, Sieveking offers a veritable

mine of information, and suggests reading which would occupy almost any length of time.

It would be an easy matter to extend this paper by reference to many other books which may fairly claim a place in garden literature, but to do this would have entailed special reading for the purpose, and this I have endeavoured to avoid. Those already referred to have so many pleasant associations clustering round them that the difficulty is to make a fair selection from their pages. And it is possibly these associations which have made garden literature popular. If we cannot enjoy the pleasures of the real garden, we can, at least, read of them, and, like Elizabeth, wander at will in those which have been so fully described for us. The great influx, also, into our large towns of country-born people who retain their affection for rural objects, but are only able to gratify their tastes in a vicarious manner, would probably be sufficiently large to create a demand for those books which remind them of early days and other scenes. The facilities of travel and the constant moving about the country further serve to increase the demand. Who is there that has tramped about England—the only way in which it can be really seen—who does not bring back with him mental pictures of gardens which have brightened up many a ramble, and which remain as permanent possessions. Gardens of all kinds, from the ducal to the roadside cottage, and, on the whole, I am inclined to think I have derived more pleasure from the sight of cottage gardens than from the grander, but more artificial, show gardens of the great. The reading ranks are also largely recruited from the number of suburban amateurs, who strive with more or less success to emulate the example of their favourite author, and to produce in their narrow strips of ground all his favourite flowers. Like Elizabeth, again, they say: "Any

book I see advertised that treats of gardens I immediately buy."

In looking over the books to which I have referred, they appear to divide themselves into three classes—(1) those which are mainly literary; (2) those which are mainly technical; and (3) those which deal largely with other subjects than that of gardening.

As representative books in these divisions I take "Country Pleasures," "Our Gardens," and "Pot Pourri from a Surrey Garden," but if asked to select from my entire list a single book which, whilst it touches fully upon gardening topics, shall yet possess a general interest, I unhesitatingly select "Country Pleasures, chiefly in a Garden."

It is a somewhat difficult matter for the ordinary reader to convey to others any adequate idea of the pleasure he has derived from his own reading. He may appreciate the beauty of language, the poetic treatment of the subject, or the forcible enrichment of the text by graceful quotation, but when he endeavours to put his own feelings into words they appear but poor and feeble. He may be filled with an almost passionate love for Nature in all its myriad forms of beauty, and yet be incapable of giving it expression in anything like fitting language, and he must often, as the present writer does, lay his pen aside with the feeling that, richly as the subject merits it, he has not been able to accord it even the scantiest justice.





ON A MOORLAND ROAD.

BY HERBERT EVELYN CAMPBELL.

Once on a sweet September day
As I wandered, the world and its cares away,
On a moorland road where three shires meet,
Fresh air in my lungs and a spring in my feet,
And my heart and nerves a-quiver,
(For trouble and grief had long been mine),
I lifted my eyes, and asked for a sign
Of comfort, by that dear river.

Then, as I stood, I became aware
Of an unseen gentle Presence there,
And, so it seemed, I heard her say,
"The night is past, and on this bright day
I come to give you a token
That all you believe is simply true,
And I am alive, as well as you,
In the old-time faith unspoken.

"Dear, do you doubt? Though, once for all,
'Mid carking cares, or pleasures that pall,
Through nights and days of ceaseless pain,
Or joys of the best of the past again,
You've gone on losing and winning,
And putting things to a mortal test,
Yet sighed, at times, for the End that is best—
I've found the End's a beginning!

" And ever and aye it must be so,
For all that come on the earth, to go ;
They leave behind the things that have been
For the things that are, but cannot be seen,
 Ere yet they have passed the portal.
Your spirit tells you there is no Death,
And the air you breathe is the self-same breath
 That inspires the Life Immortal.

" Now you are happier ; learn from this
In mortal life is no certain bliss ;
God, Whom, in turn, man slights and adores,
Gives, takes away, and at last restores,
 In mercy His wrath abating.
Go, dear—fare faithfully on your road,
And you'll come, in time, to your own abode,
 And find me working and waiting."

Faded away that fancied form—
All fancies fade—but in sun and storm
Henceforth I know that in love, not fear,
We can hold, up there, what was once ours here
 By a tie that nought can sever.
Best-loved, who have sailed to the distant shore !
I know that my Now is your Evermore,
 And I love you for ever and ever !





THE VALLEY OF ASPHODEL.

BY THOMAS KAY.

I love the sweet brook near the end of the dell
Where the branches together entwine
Round the cot where the lady I loved did dwell
Embosomed in eglantine.
'Tis there where the cystus and asphodel grow,
The flowers of spring-time and love,
The sweet rose of hope and the dull star of woe
Enriched by the sun from above.

O ye cystus and asphodel,
And the lady I lov'd so well,
'Tis sad here to part
With ruth in my heart
From the Valley of Asphodel.

The brooklet is lost in the soft silver sand,
The flowers are withered and past,
But the water enriches the roots in the land
And the fruits o'er the valley are cast.
The dull thorns of hope and the brown blades of woe
Lie prone to the earth as if dead,
I scatter the ashes of love to and fro
And hallow decay in its bed.

O ye cystus and asphodel,
And the lady I lov'd so well,
'Tis sad here to part
With ruth in my heart
From the Valley of Asphodel.

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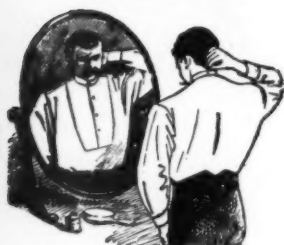
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